



Background

This is one of a range of topic papers prepared to offer more detailed information and explain the approach of the Plan to different topics and issues affecting the Joint Local Development Plan Area. This paper will look specifically at *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation*. It will explain the background which will help to identify the issues, objectives and options for the Deposit Plan.

The Deposit Plan is the second statutory stage in the preparation of the Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP). The JLDP shapes the future growth of communities in the Joint Local Development Plan Area and will set out the policies and land allocations against which planning applications will be assessed.

The Deposit Plan will be submitted to the Welsh Government, which will appoint an independent inspector to assess the soundness of the Plan in the Examination in Public. If the inspector considers the Plan to be sound it will be recommended for adoption. When adopted the JLDP will supersede the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (2009) for the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority Area and the Gwynedd Structure Plan (1993) and Ynys Môn Local Plan (1996) for the Ynys Môn Local Planning Authority.

This topic paper can be read in isolation or in conjunction with the other Topic Papers and Background Papers that have been prepared to give a full picture of the Joint Local Development Plan Area.

You may refer to the Topic Paper as a basis for making comments about the Deposit Plan. It must be noted that only comments on the Deposit Plan will be considered by the Inspector at the Examination in Public rather than specific comment made on the Topic Papers.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the Topic Papers or Background Papers with a member of the Joint Planning Policy Unit you can contact us at:

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1.0 Context

- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers where a need has been identified
- The Welsh Assembly Government Circular 30/07 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites strengthened the requirement that local authorities identify and make provision for appropriate sites in their local plans
- The Welsh Government's 'Travelling to a Better Future' sets out a detailed policy framework for Councils
- There are known occurrences of unauthorised encampments within the Plan area (Appendix 2 and 3)
- Evidence suggests that there is a need for permanent and temporary Gypsy and Traveller sites in appropriate locations within the Plan area

1.1 Planning Policy Wales Edition 7 (2014 (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government (WG) and directs that local authorities are required to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers (para 9.2.21 refers) and states that it is important that policies for the provision of Gypsy sites are included in local development plans.

1.2 Evidence from the 2011 Census reflects previous research which has estimated that between half to three quarters of Gypsy or Irish travellers live in bricks and mortar accommodation. Suggested reasons for this are the lack of available caravan sites and sites that have access to required amenities and services. In the 2011 Census, whole house or bungalow was the most common type of accommodation for respondents who identified themselves as Gypsy or Irish Travellers, at 61 % compared to 84 % for all usual residents in England and Wales. Caravan or other

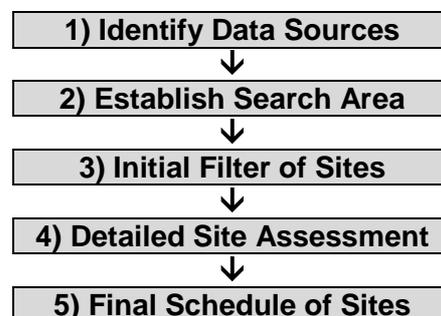
mobile or temporary structure accounted for 24 % of Gypsy or Irish Traveller accommodation, well above that for the whole of England and Wales (0.3%).

- 1.3 An understanding of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation issues is helpful to make properly planned provision and avoid the problems associated with ad hoc or unauthorised provision.
- 1.4 Local authorities are required to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller families under Sections 225 & 226 of the Housing Act 2004. Where there is an assessment of unmet need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the area the Council should identify sufficient sites in local development plans to ensure that the identified pitch requirement for residential and transit use can be met.
- 1.5 In accordance with the Housing Act 2004, the North West Wales and Flintshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) (2011) was undertaken for all the North Wales local planning authorities apart from Wrexham (who had undertaken a separate study).
- 1.6 The findings of the GTANA indicate that there is a requirement for 11 permanent residential pitches to replace the existing tolerated site near Pentraeth, Anglesey and a requirement for an additional 10 permanent residential pitches in Gwynedd. The GTANA has calculated that 28 'transit' pitches are required in North Wales to be shared between the Local Authorities. There are currently no authorised transit sites in North Wales. 'Transit' pitches can either be on formal sites that are similar to permanent residential sites but the occupier can only stay up to 3 months. Alternatively they can be accommodated at temporary stopping places. Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council are currently working together to identify permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller site as well as a formal transit site.
- 1.7 There is currently one authorised local authority owned residential Gypsy site at Llandygai, near Bangor with capacity for 7 pitches. There is also a tolerated Travellers site near Pentraeth, where 11 caravans are sited. It is considered that this site offers unsatisfactory living conditions and therefore should be relocated to a more appropriate site.
- 1.8 A new Census Style Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment will be undertaken following the passing of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The assessment must be carried out in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. The results of the new Census Style Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and the proposed new system for undertaking the Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count will provide a more robust basis for calculating the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the Plan Area than the existing GTANA.
- 1.9 Based on existing evidence published in the GTANA, it is considered that policies will be required in the Deposit Joint Local Development Plan (LDP) to safeguard existing and future Gypsy and Traveller Sites from changes of use to alternative uses whilst there remains a need for sites as evidenced by the most up to date Gypsy Traveller Needs Assessment. Criteria based policies will also be required to make provision for additional need arising throughout the Plan period. The proposed criteria based policy for new permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller Sites will be framed having regard available Welsh Government good practice guidance

- 1.10 Whereas there is an expectation that site-specific proposals should be identified in the Deposit Joint LDP in order to meet the shortfall of provision indicated in the current GTANA, only one site, an extension to the existing site at Llandegai to provide an additional 5 pitches is likely to be shown on the Proposals Map. This means that at this stage there is still a shortfall of 5 permanent residential pitches in Gwynedd and 11 pitches on Anglesey. The Councils need to identify further sites for Gypsies and Travellers to satisfy the identified need for permanent residential pitches, as well as sites to include temporary stopping places to satisfy the transient nature of use within the Plan Area.
- 1.11 The following Site Assessment Methodology will be used to identify a Final Schedule of Sites with potential for use as Gypsy or Traveller Sites. Following completion of the detailed assessment a working group of officers and key stakeholders will consider the short-listed sites to produce a final schedule of suitable sites, which will be consulted upon. It is anticipated that work to identify the required sites will be completed before the Plan is submitted to the Welsh Government.

2.0 Site Assessment Methodology

- 2.1 According to the “Good Practice Guide in Designing Gypsy Traveller Sites in Wales” (Welsh Government, 2009), when allocating residential sites for the Gypsy and Travellers community, local planning authorities are required to ensure that sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. In order to identify the most appropriate sites, each potential site will be subject to an assessment process, which is in five stages:



1) Identify Data Sources

- 2.2 For the purposes of this assessment four sources of data have been identified which are:
- a) Public Owned Land – making full use of any registers of under used or vacant public owned land.
 - b) Local Development Plan Candidate Sites – as part of Joint LDP process both Local Planning Authorities has a duty to identify sites where development such as housing, employment and open spaces. In October 2011 a Candidate Site Register was formally opened where stakeholders, landowners and other interested parties were invited to submit land for potential inclusion in the Joint LDP. The call for sites resulted in over 800 sites being submitted for a range of different uses. No sites were submitted specifically for consideration as a Gypsy

and Traveller sites but many have the potential to provide for this use. Owners of any sites that are considered suitable for Gypsy and Travellers will be contacted to ascertain whether the site is available for this use.

c) Local Authority Staff - Discussions will be held with Local Authority staff to identify other possible suitable sites within the Joint LDP area.

d) Historical Unauthorised Encampments – consideration will be given to unauthorised encampments where the Gypsy and Traveller communities have been known to stay in the past (Appendix 2 Locations of unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller Encampments (Gwynedd 2007-10)(Anglesey 2009-10).

2.3 The Joint Planning Policy Unit (JPPU) undertook a Call for Sites exercise to help identify sites that could be considered for inclusion in the Joint LDP. The Call for Sites exercise took place over a six-week period, between 4 December 2013 and 17 January 2014. During this period, the Gypsy and Traveller community, landowners, organisations or anyone else were invited to suggest sites to the Councils. Only two sites were submitted as a result of this exercise, both of which were located outside the Plan Area but within the National Park. The JPPU have received confirmation from the Snowdonia National Park that neither of these sites were suitable.

2) Establish Search Area

2.4 To facilitate the process of identifying sites, it is necessary to narrow down the potential search areas to more efficiently identify suitable and sustainable sites.

2.5 The Good Practice Guide states that when considering where to locate a new site, local authorities will have to locate sites, including transit sites, in locations that meet the current working patterns of Gypsies and Travellers and that are in close proximity to transport links. The guidance also states that when identifying permanent and transit sites local authorities should consider locations near existing settlements with access to local services, community facilities and accessible by public transport.

2.6 Taking the above into consideration the search areas for permanent sites will concentrate on the settlements that have access to the three primary services (a school, a doctor and a food shop) and are approximately within 2km of a main transport route. On Anglesey the search area will concentrate along the A5 and the A55, and in Gwynedd along the A55, A470, A487 and the A494. The JPPU will be discussing possible suitable sites within the Snowdonia National Park National Park with National Park Officers. Temporary stopping sites will concentrate on areas within approximately 2km of the main transport routes and their junctions.

2.7 The following settlements were identified as conforming to the above criteria:

Isle of Anglesey	Gwynedd
Bodedern	Bangor
Gaerwen	Bethesda
Gwalchmai	Caernarfon
Holyhead	Penygroes
Llanfairpwll	Penrhyndeudraeth
Llangefni	Porthmadog
Menai Bridge	Y Felinheli
Valley	

Maps of the indicative search areas can be found in Appendix 1.

3) Initial Filter of Sites

- 2.8 The initial filtering of sites will consider its general location, site area, any major constraints to development and the site's planning history. Guidance states that if a location is considered inappropriate for residential use then it should not be considered appropriate for a Gypsy or Traveller site.
- 2.9 There are no definitive guidelines on the size of individual pitches but the guidelines states that the sites should be considered in context and in relation to the local infrastructure and population size and density to ensure they do not dominate local settled communities. For the purposes of this assessment a minimum threshold of 0.3ha will be used for permanent sites. Temporary stopping sites will concentrate on suitable sites along or near the main route corridors (a map of the main route corridors can be found in Appendix 2)
- 2.10 Sites that are identified as being totally unrealistic to develop, do not comply with national or local policy or have fundamental constraints that cannot be overcome or mitigated will not be taken forward to the next stage of the assessment.
- 2.11 This stage of the assessment will discard sites if they lie within or are likely to have a significant effect on any of the following designations:
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
 - Special Protection areas (SPA)
 - National Nature Reserves (NNR)
 - C1 and C2 Flood Zones (TAN15)
 - Mineral and Coal Safeguarding Sites
 - World Heritage Sites (WHS)

4) Detailed Sites Assessment

- 2.12 Following the initial assessment, a detailed desktop, GIS based site-specific assessment will need to be undertaken. Where necessary site visits will also be arranged. The appraisal is divided into the following areas:-
- **Accessibility** – considering the suitability of vehicular access to the site, location of the site with regard to public transport routes and accessibility by foot or cycle to a range of community facilities.
 - **Environmental Capital** – considering whether or not the site is at risk from flooding, whether there would be any loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, whether the site is greenfield or brownfield, whether there is a potential risk of contaminated land, whether or not it is protected by environmental designations, whether it is considered to have environmental value.
 - **Site Context and Character** – whether topographical characteristics of the site may present an obstacle to development, whether development would have an impact on views/vistas, whether the site is in close proximity to existing infrastructure and whether or not there would be potential adverse impact from adjoining land uses.
 - **Continuity and Enclosure** – whether development of the site would provide continuity and enclosure in respect to adjacent land uses.

- **Climate Change Mitigation** – would the proposal be vulnerable to the effects of climate change including issues of flooding or drainage, would the development be able to incorporate renewable energy sources or energy conservation measures.

2.13 All sites considered as options for site allocation in the Joint LDP must have their social, environmental and economic impacts assessed in accordance with the requirements of sustainability appraisal.

2.14 The Joint LDP Sustainability Appraisal contains a series of Sustainability Objectives that will ensure that the Joint LDP is assessed against environmental, economic and social criteria. All sites will be assessed against this framework using the table below:

SUSTAINABILITY APPRASIAL KEY	
	Development actively encouraged to resolve an existing sustainability problem
	No sustainability constraints and development acceptable
	Neutral
	Unknown effect
	Potential sustainability issues; mitigation and/or negotiation possible
	Problematical and improbable because of known sustainability issues; mitigation or negotiation difficult and/or expensive
	Absolute sustainability constraints to development

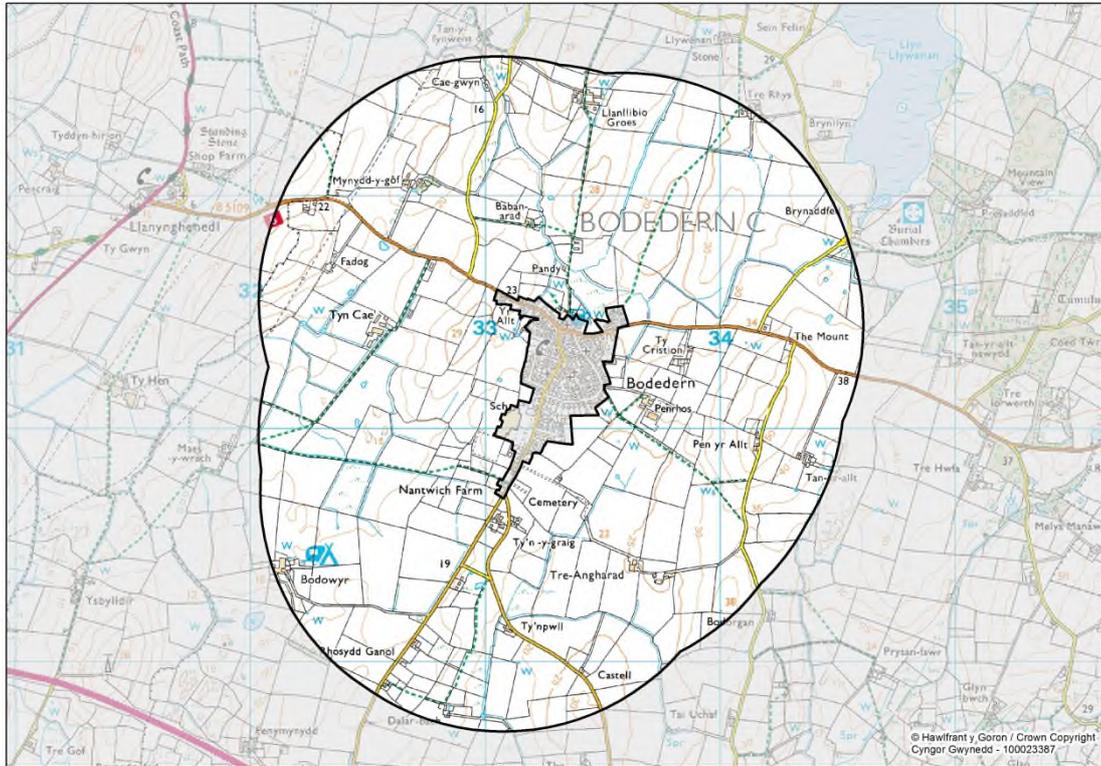
5) Final Schedule of Sites

- 2.15 Following completion of the detailed assessment a working group of officers and key stakeholders will consider the short-listed sites to produce a final schedule of suitable sites, which will be consulted upon.
- 2.16 The evidence referred to in this topic paper will be used to underpin the proposed policies and proposals in the Deposit Local Development Plan.

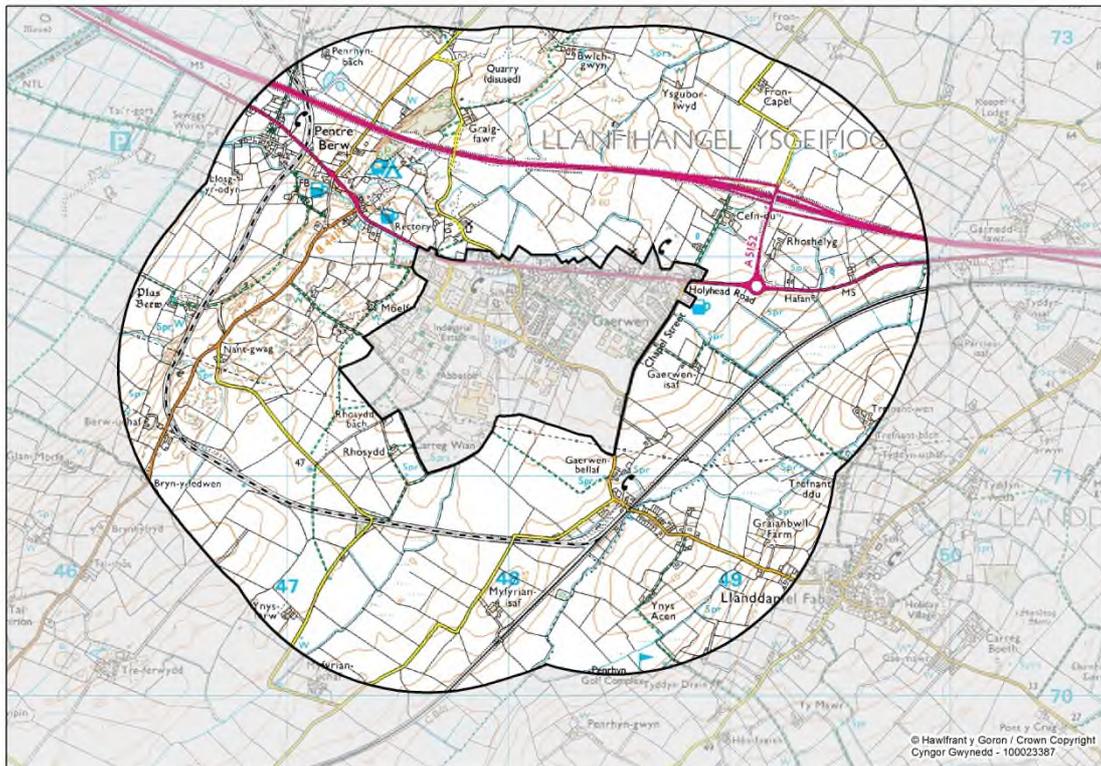
Appendix 1

INDICATIVE SEARCH AREA MAPS

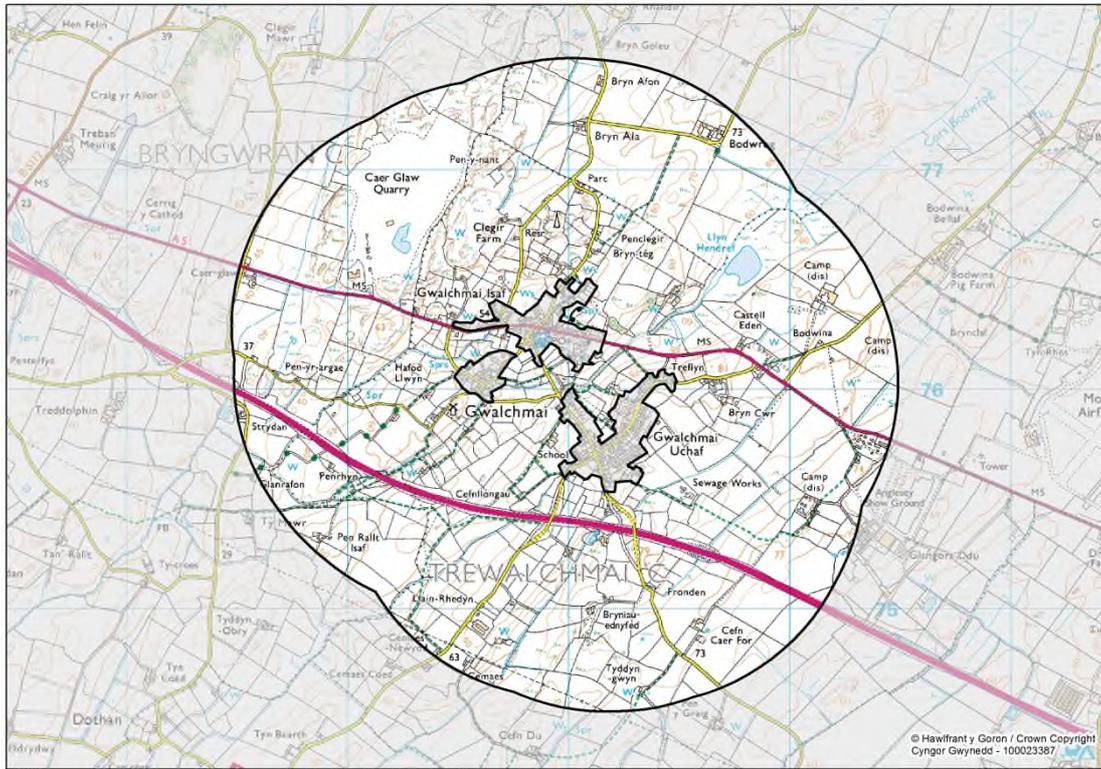
Bodedern



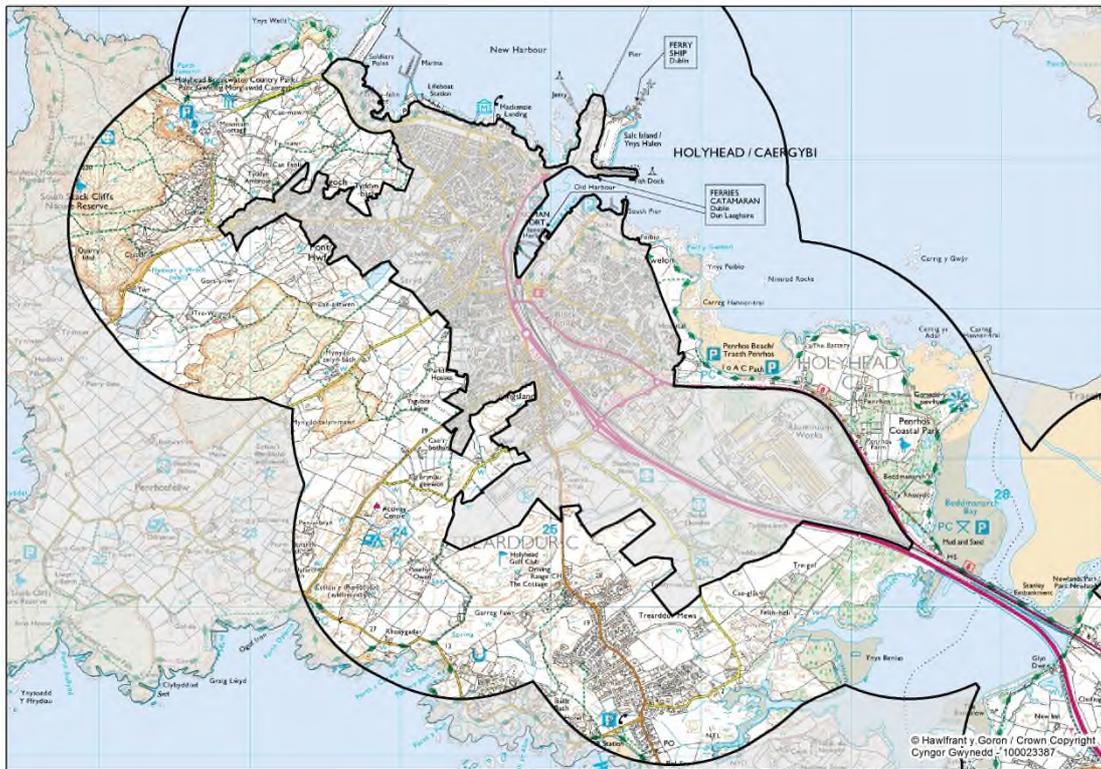
Gaerwen



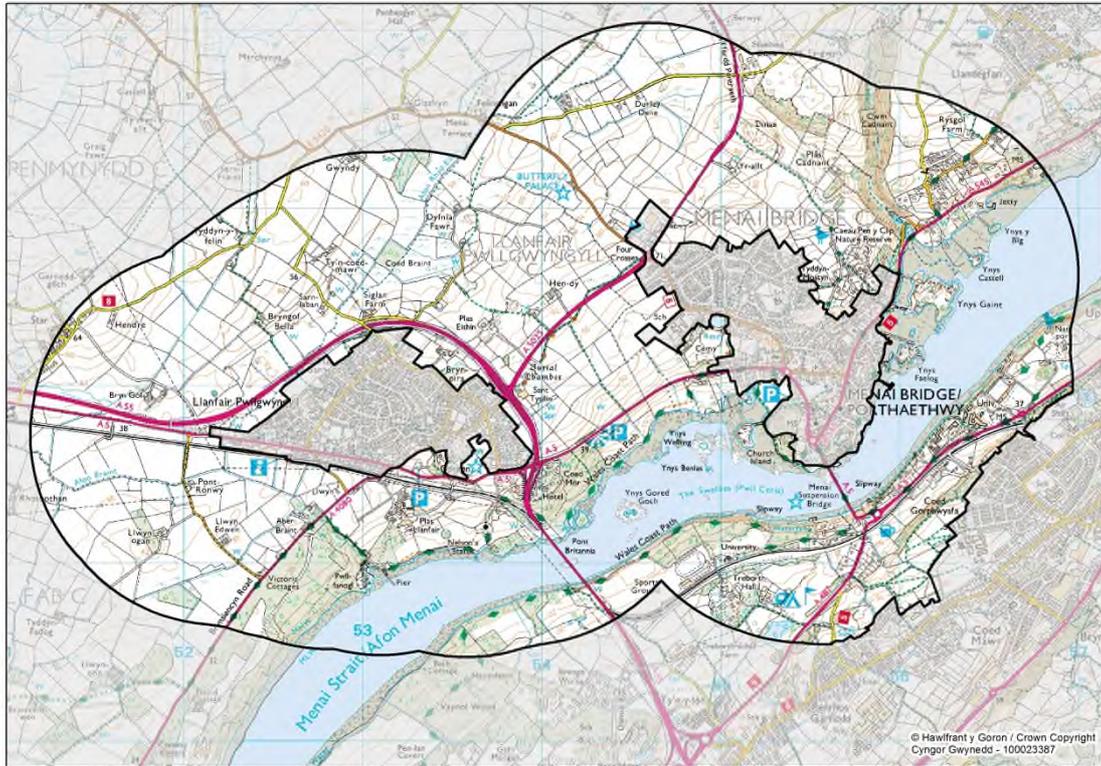
Gwalchmai



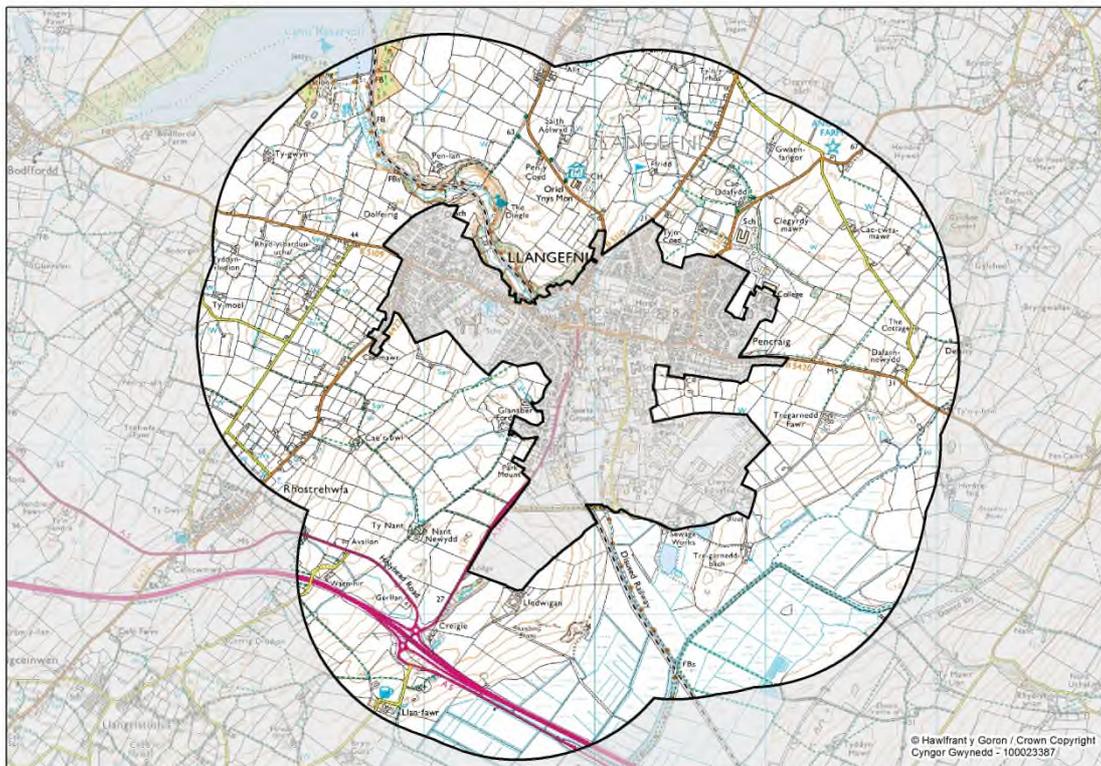
Holyhead



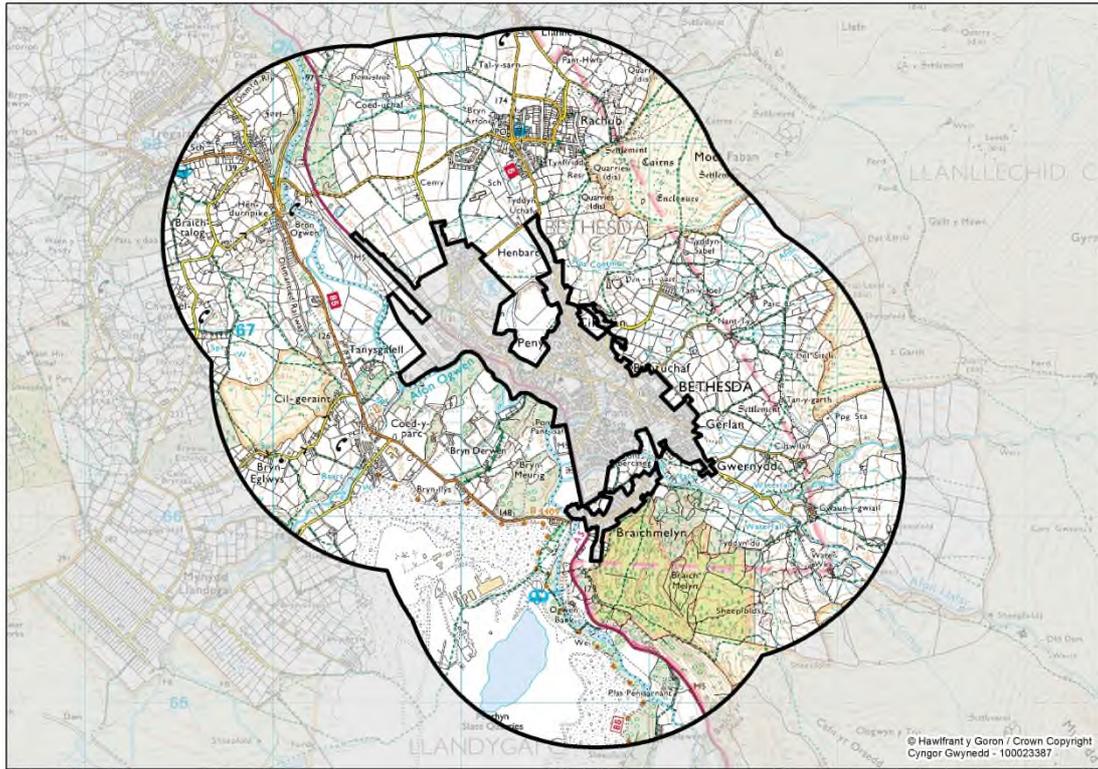
Llanfairpwll & Menai Bridge



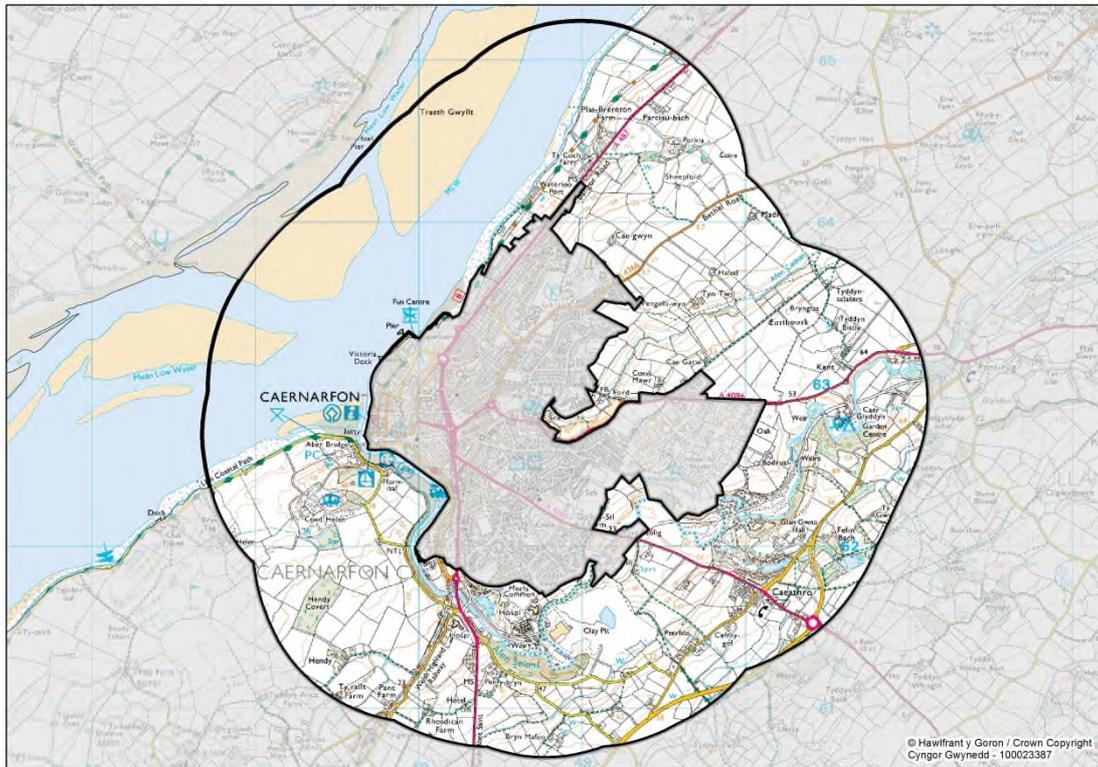
Llangefni



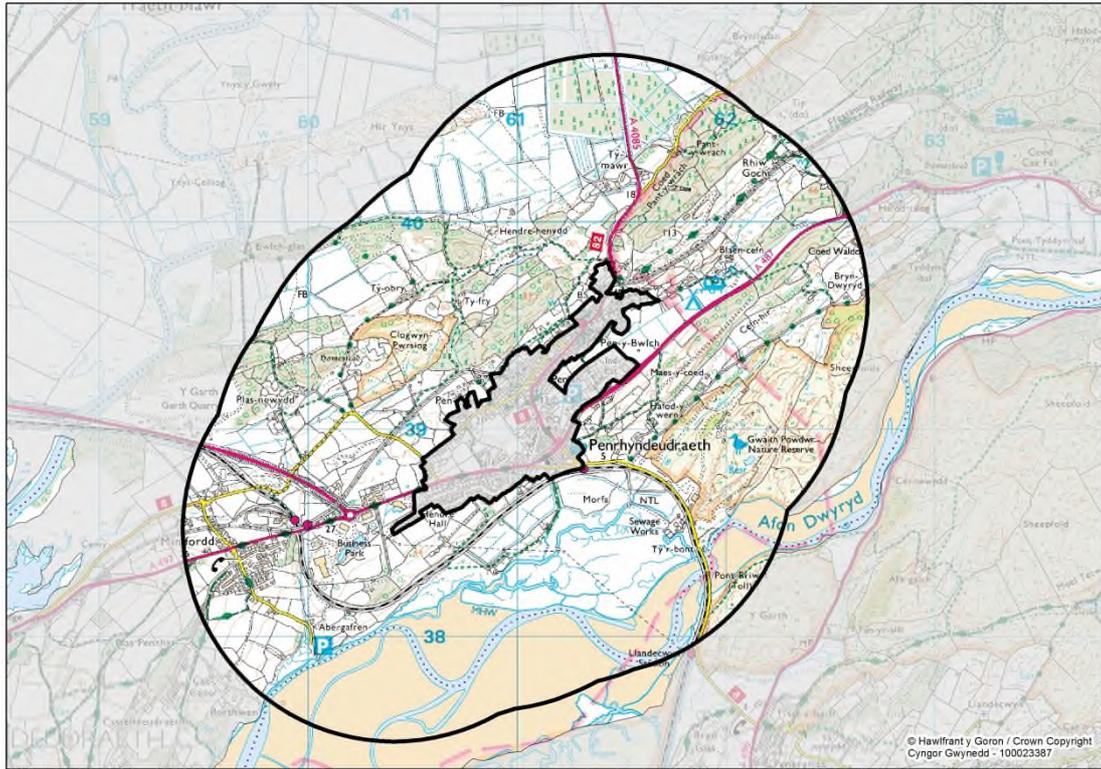
Bethesda



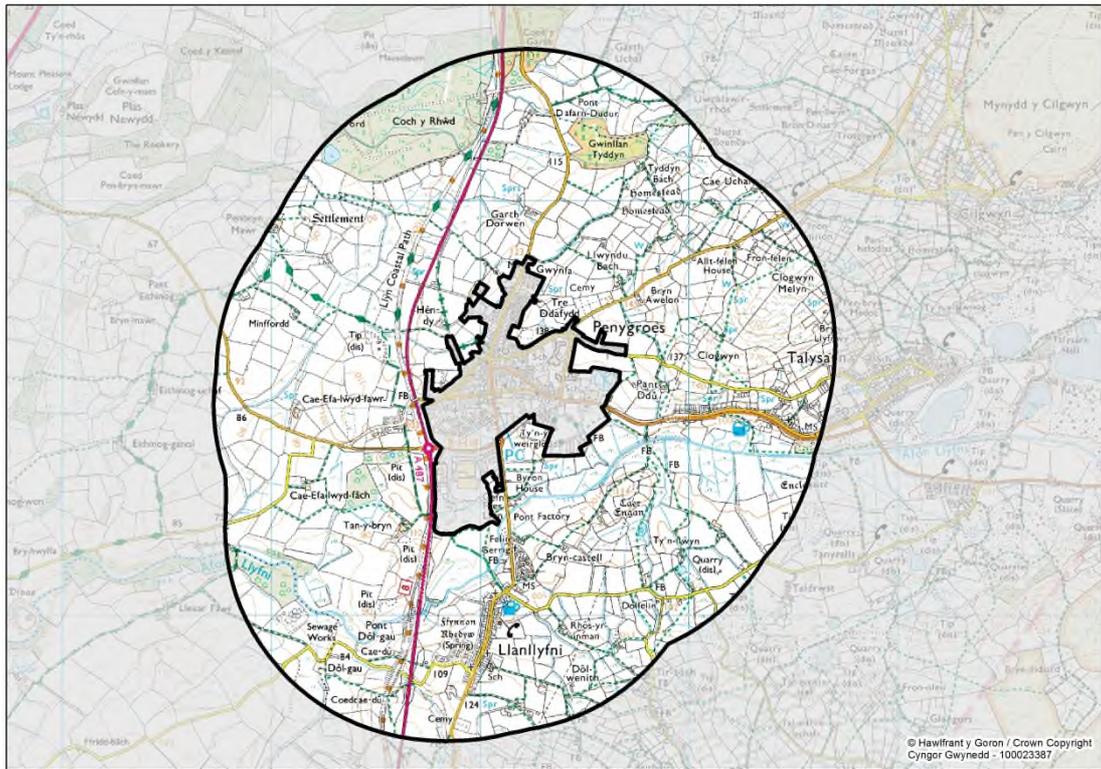
Caernarfon



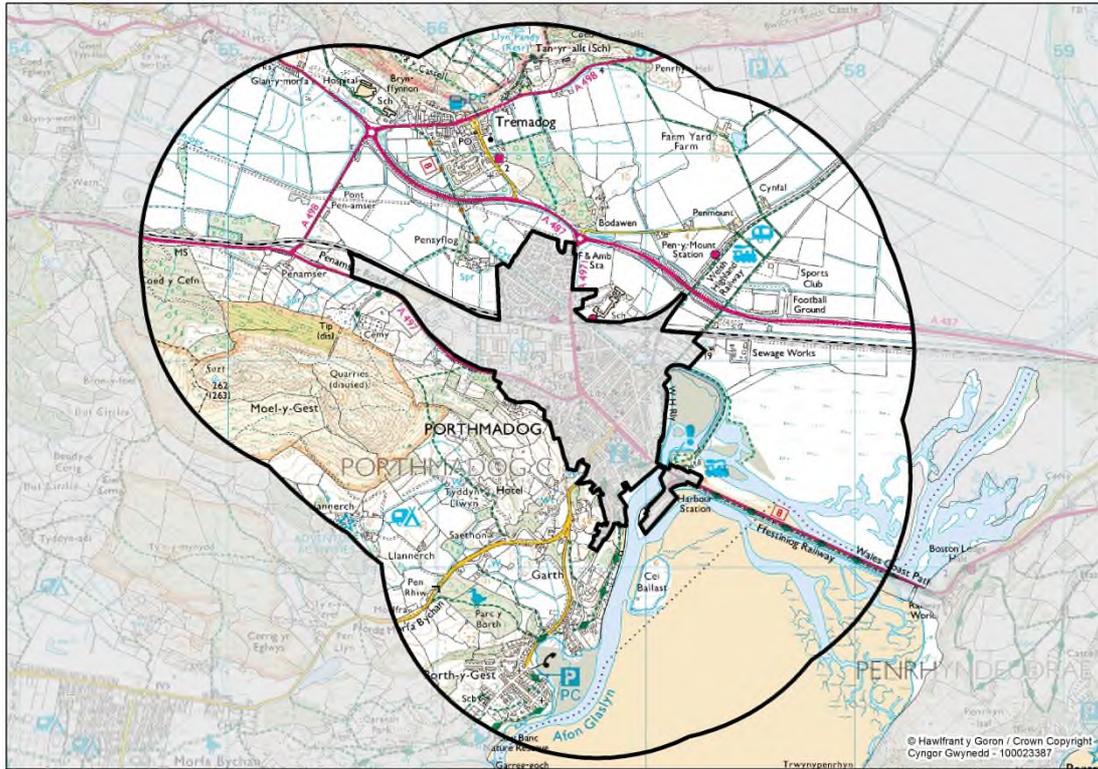
Penrhyndeudraeth



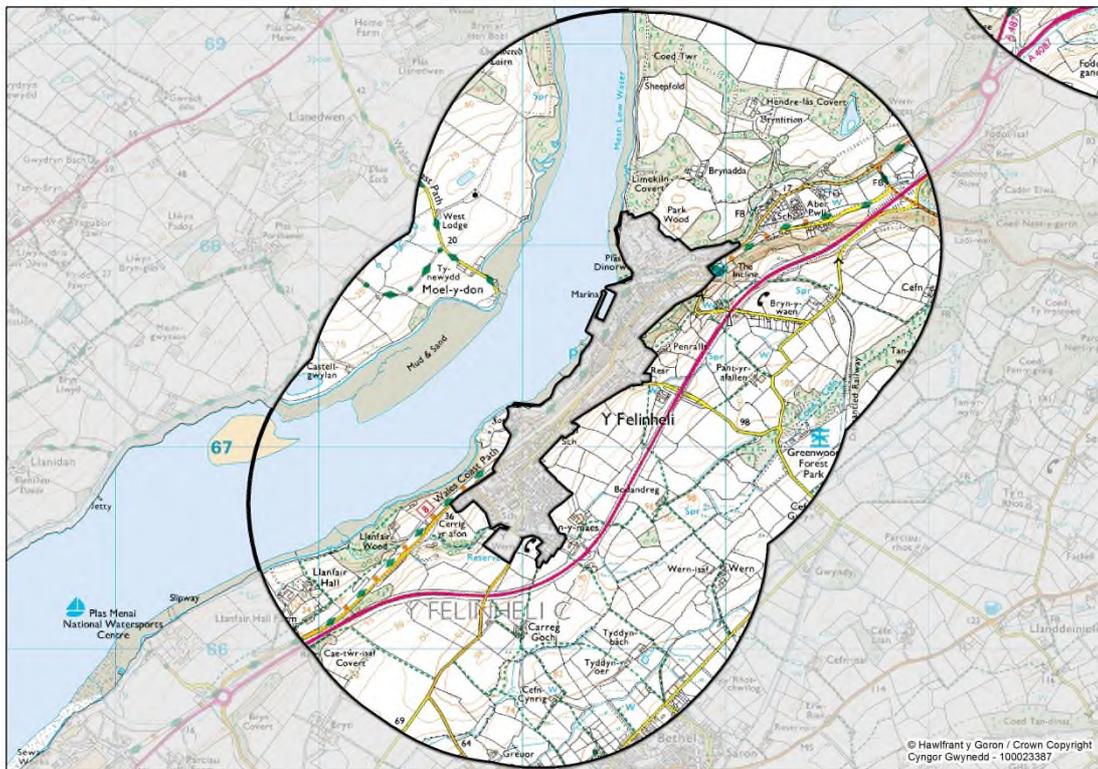
Penygroes



Porthmadog



Y Felinheli

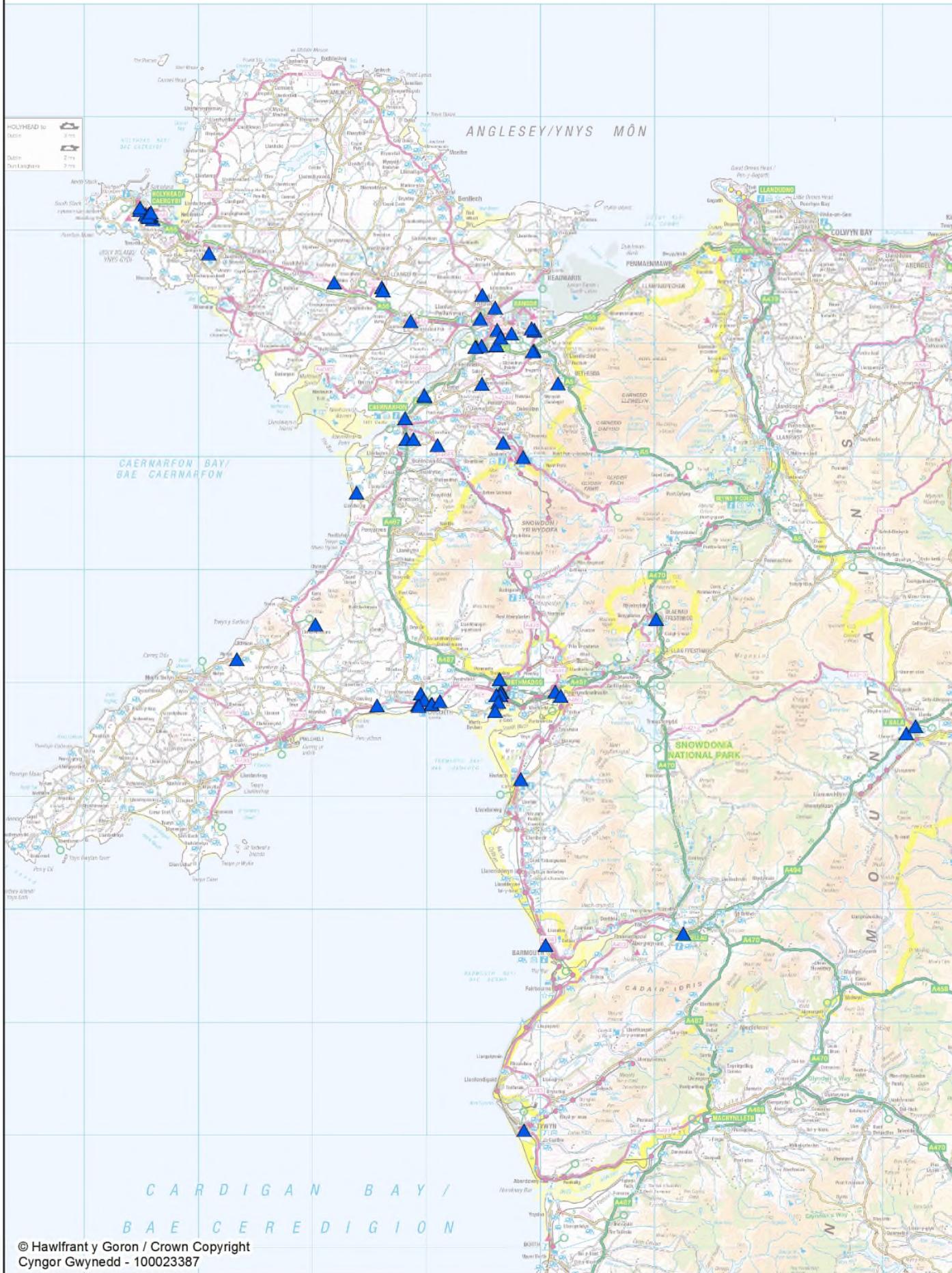


Appendix 2

Lleoliadau Gwersyllau Sipsiwn a Theithwyr Heb Awdurdod

Locations of Unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller Encampments

(Gwynedd 2007-2010; Anglesey/Ynys Môn 2009-2010)



Appendix 3

NUMBER OF CARAVANS ON AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED SITES REPORTED IN BI-ANNUAL GYPSY AND TRAVELLER CARAVAN COUNTS 2013-2014

	January 2013		July 2013		January 2014		July 2014	
	Authorised Sites (with planning permission)	Unauthorised Sites (without planning permission)	Authorised Sites (with planning permission)	Unauthorised Sites (without planning permission)	Authorised Sites (with planning permission)	Unauthorised Sites (without planning permission)	Authorised Sites (with planning permission)	Unauthorised Sites (without planning permission)
Isle of Anglesey	0	11	0	39	0	12	0	32
Gwynedd	13	0	10	12	10	0	10	3

Source SDR 154/2014 Welsh Government

Appendix 4

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Welsh Government Circular (2007)	30/2007 Planning for Gypsy And Traveller Caravan sites
Welsh Government (2009)	Good Practice Guide in Designing Gypsy Traveller Sites in Wales
Welsh Government (2009)	Good Practice Guide in Managing Gypsy Traveller Sites in Wales
Welsh Government (2013)	'Travelling to a Better Future'- A Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan November 2013 update
Welsh Government (2014)	Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments - Consultation Draft
Welsh Government (2014)	Good Practice Guide in Designing Gypsy Traveller Sites in Wales - Consultation Draft
Welsh Government (2014)	Good Practice Guide in Managing Gypsy Traveller Sites in Wales - Consultation Draft
Hirst D and Crew T (2013)	North Wales Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment http://www.conwy.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/563/GTANA_Report_English.pdf http://www.conwy.gov.uk/upload/public/attachments/563/GTANA_Report_CYMRAEG.pdf

Welsh Government Statistics for Wales (2014)	SDR (154/2014) Gypsy and Traveller Count July 2014
ONS Office for National Statistics (2014)	What does the 2011 Census tell us about the Characteristics of Gypsy or Irish Travellers in England and Wales?

Appendix 5

GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS DEFINITION (SECTION 91 OF THE HOUSING WALES ACT 2014)

Persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin including-

- (i) (i) Persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and (ii) Members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such): and
- (ii) Members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such): and
- (iii) All other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a mobile home