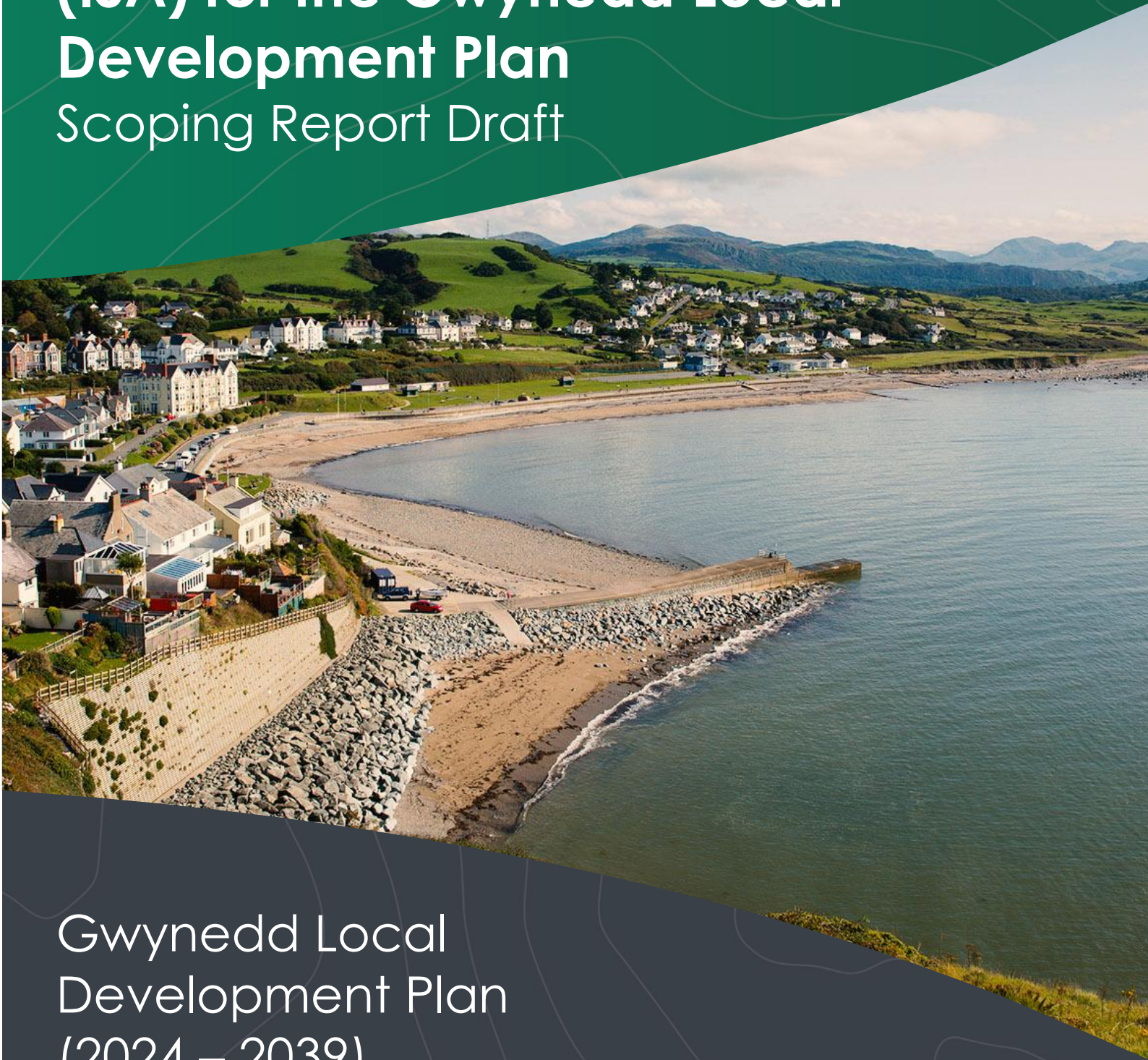
Cyngor Gwynedd

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) for the Gwynedd Local Development Plan

Scoping Report Draft



Gwynedd Local Development Plan (2024 – 2039)

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Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) for the Local Development Plan

Scoping Report

Cyngor Gwynedd

August 2026

Delivering a better world

Quality information

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context

1.1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) in support of Cyngor Gwynedd's Local Development Plan (LDP). ISA for the LDP fulfils the requirements and duties for Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Well-being of Future Generations (WBFG). It also takes account of the recent Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Act 2026.

1.1.2 The ISA for this LDP is also informed by a Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) arising out of the requirements and duties under the policy making standards of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

1.1.3 ISA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of ISA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative impacts and maximising positive impacts. Through this approach, the ISA LDP seeks to maximise the developing plan's contribution to sustainable development.

1.2 Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan

1.2.1 The Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 was adopted on the 31st of July 2017.[1] The Joint LDP forms the development framework for both Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Planning Authority areas and is the basis for decisions on land use planning in the area, from that date until superseded. It excludes the Eryri National Park, which has its own adopted Local Development Plan.[2] In accordance with statutory requirements, the Joint LDP has been monitored on an annual basis with seven Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR) published to date.[3]

1.2.2 To ensure that LDPs are kept up to date, Section 69 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004[4] requires a Local Planning Authority to undertake a full review of a LDP at least once every four years following plan adoption. Accordingly, in July 2021 Anglesey and Gwynedd Councils commenced their formal review of the adopted Joint LDP, with the draft Review Report having been made available for consultation between the 5th November 2021 and the 20th of December 2021.[5] The Review Report considered the effectiveness of the adopted LDP and recommended that a full revision of the Joint LDP be undertaken.

1.2.3 Following a decision between Cyngor Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey County Council to cease the joint working agreement on Planning Policy

[1] Cyngor Gwynedd (2017): 'Joint Local Development Plan' can be accessed here.
[2] Eryri National Park (2019): 'Eryri Local Development Plan 2016-2031' can be accessed here.
[3] Cyngor Gwynedd (2025): 'Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 7th Annual Monitoring Report' can be accessed here.
[4] UK Government (2004): 'Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004' can be accessed here.
[5] Cyngor Gwynedd (2021): 'Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 Draft Review Report' can be accessed here.

matters on 31 March 2023, the Gwynedd Planning Policy Service was established.[6] Work formally commenced on the emerging LDP for Gwynedd following the Welsh Government's approval of the LDP Delivery Agreement, which includes the timetable and Community Involvement Scheme. The LDP will set out the Council's objectives and priorities for the development and use of land within the LPA area for the period 2024 to 2039. The area covered by the LDP is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

[6] Cyngor Gwynedd (no date): 'Gwynedd Local Development Plan (the New Plan)' can be accessed here.

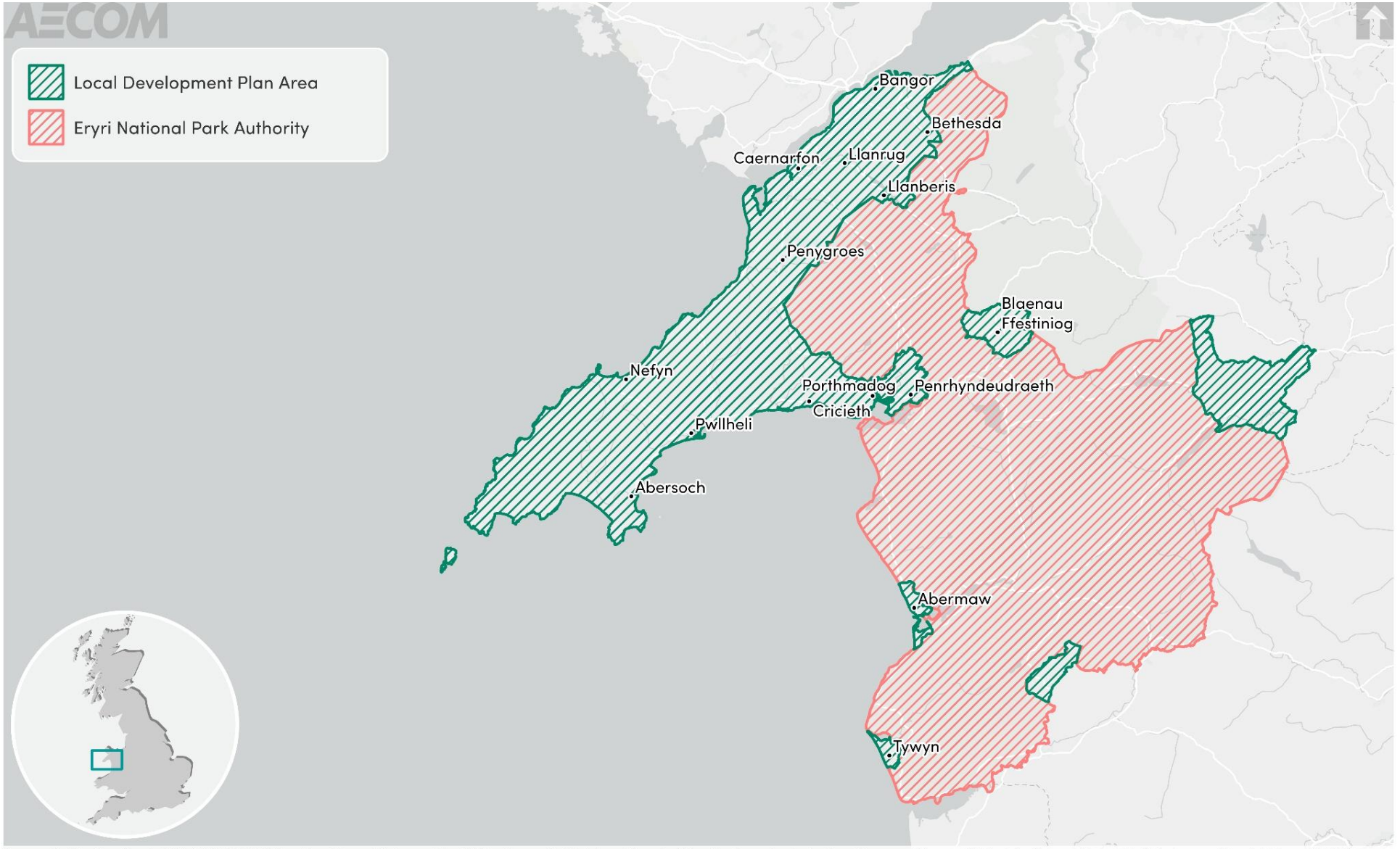

Figure 1-1: Cyngor Gwynedd administrative area

1.3 ISA explained

1.3.1 As identified above, the ISA seeks to fulfil the requirements and duties for SA, SEA, EqIA, HIA, and WBFG, and incorporate the findings of the WLIA. The approach is to fully integrate these components to provide a single assessment process to inform the development of the LDP. A description of each of the various components and their purposes is provided below.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

1.3.2 SA is undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).[7] SA is a legal requirement for Local Development Plans under Section 39 (2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

1.3.3 In line with the requirements of the SEA Directive, the two key steps in SA are that:

- When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the SA Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
- A report (the 'SA Report') is published for consultation alongside the Draft Plan that presents an assessment of the Draft Plan (i.e., discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

1.3.4 The Development Plans Manual Edition 3 (2020)[8] states that SA, incorporating SEA, plays an important part in demonstrating that the LDP is sound by ensuring that it reflects sustainable development objectives and that it should be an integral element at each stage of plan-making.

Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA)

1.3.5 As a public-sector organisation, Cyngor Gwynedd has a duty under the Equality Act 2010[9] and associated Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to ensure that the objectives and policy options within the LDP avoid unlawful discrimination (direct and indirect), as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between those with protected characteristics and all others.

1.3.6 In March 2021 the Socio-economic Duty Act commenced, which complements the Equalities Act and PSED by further contributing towards Wales' long term well-being goals, in particular "A more equal Wales" and "A Wales of cohesive communities". This further strengthens social partnership arrangements and advances fair work ambitions.[10]

1.3.7 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is often used by public sector organisations to demonstrate how this duty has been met.

[7] UK Government (2004): 'The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004' can be accessed here.
[8] Welsh Government (2020): 'Development Plans Manual (Edition 3)' can be accessed here.
[9] UK Government (2010): 'Equality Act 2010' can be accessed here.
[10] Welsh Government (2020): 'A more equal Wales: strengthening social partnership white paper' can be accessed here.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

1.3.8 The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017[11] requires a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to be carried out to assess the likely effect of the proposed development plan on health and mental well-being and inequality. The HIA process provides a systematic yet flexible and practical framework that can be used to consider the wider effects of LDP policies and how they may affect people's health.

1.3.9 It is noted that the Health Impact Assessment (Wales) Regulation 2025 were passed in the Senedd on the 18th of November 2025 and will come into force on the 6th of April 2027. They require certain public bodies in Wales to carry out a health impact assessment when proposing to make a decision of a strategic nature about how they exercise their functions and are secondary legislation under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017. They support a "health in all policies" approach across the public sector.

Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA)

1.3.10 Whilst there is a legislative requirement (section 62(6A) that the SA must include an appraisal of the likely effects on the use of the Welsh language in the area of the authority, the Welsh Language Commissioner advises that the requirements do not remove the need to prepare a separate WLIA to comply with the Welsh language standards. A WLIA is being prepared separately and will inform the ISA.

1.3.11 The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 makes provision about promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language, including policy standards relating to the Welsh language. A 'policy making standard' is intended to secure or contribute to securing one or more outcomes which include what effect, if any the policy decision would have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language. The WLIA methodologies in general use by planning authorities for development plans tend to follow the assessment and processes for SA supplemented in more sensitive linguistic areas by more quantitative risk assessment theory and practice.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

1.3.12 The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 sets out the definition of sustainable development for the planning system in Wales, mirroring the definition in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015[12] (WBFGA):

"Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals".

1.3.13 The WBFGA sets seven well-being goals which all public bodies are required to achieve:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.

[11] UK Government (2017): 'Public Health (Wales) Act 2017' can be accessed here.
[12] UK Government (2015): 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' can be accessed here.

- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and
- A globally responsible Wales.

1.3.14 The Act also identifies five ways of working which public bodies need to demonstrate they have carried out when undertaking their duty to achieve sustainable development. These are: involvement, collaboration, integration, prevention and long-term factors. The well-being goals and the five ways of working can be used to inform and structure the ISA framework.

Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Act 2026

1.3.15 The recent Act defines statutory 'environmental principles' to which regard must be had when carrying out functions in connection with the assessment of plans and programmes. The four principles are:

- The precautionary principle so far as relating to the environment
- The principle that preventative action should be taken to avoid environmental damage
- The principle that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source
- The polluter pays principle

1.3.16 The ISA recognises that these principles are embedded as part of a best practice approach. Due regard is given to preventative actions (predominantly policy directions) proposed by the Local Plan or being implemented through other plans and policies. It also seeks to identify where sensitive receptors may be affected by the proposals of the plan (e.g., at specific site allocations made in the plan), where alternatives exist, and any measures foreseen as likely to mitigate the impacts of development. Mitigation is explored from an ISA 'environment first' approach, free from (where reasonable to do so) limitations such as viability considerations (which become a consideration for the Council), with the intention of showing the full extent of preventative measures that should be taken or positive actions that could be realised.

1.4 Approach to scoping for the ISA

1.4.1 Developing the scoping report has involved the following steps:

- Exploring the national, regional, and local policy context for the ISA, i.e., reviewing high level messages (e.g., from government departments and agencies in particular) with a view to gaining an understanding of broadly what the ISA needs to focus on. It is considered that national policy documents sufficiently deal with higher level (international) policy context.

- Establishing the baseline for the ISA, i.e., the current and further situation in the area in the absence of the LDP, to help identify the plan's likely significant effects.
- Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the ISA; and
- Developing an ISA framework comprising objectives and assessment questions based on these issues which can then be used to assess the LDP and consider alternatives.

1.5 Structure of this report

1.5.1 The outcomes of the scoping elements introduced above have been represented under a series of ISA themes, as follows:

- Accessibility.
- Air quality.
- Biodiversity and geodiversity.
- Climate change adaptation.
- Climate change mitigation.
- Communities.
- Economy and employment.
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Historic environment.
- Housing.
- Landscape.
- Soil resources and quality.
- Transportation & movement.
- Water resources and quality.

1.5.2 The selected ISA themes incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations[13] as well as fully integrating EqIA and HIA, and reflecting the seven well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

1.5.3 It is intended that presenting the scoping information under these themes will help enable the reader to easily locate the information of greatest interest to them. Once agreed (i.e., after the current consultation), the suggested scope presented under 15 themes will provide a methodological 'framework' for the assessment of the draft new LDP and alternatives. The discussion of the scoping information under each ISA theme is presented in **Chapters 2 to 16.**

[13] The SEA Regulations are 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and do not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on *'the environment, **including on issues such as** biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'* [our emphasis].

The objectives for each theme are then bought together in one table 'the ISA framework' in Appendix A.

2. Accessibility

2.1 Introduction to theme

2.1.1 This chapter has a focus on identifying accessible locations in the LDP area with sustainable transport links, essential services, and inclusive infrastructure.

2.2 Policy context

2.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 2-1**.

Table 2-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to accessibility

Document title	Year of publication
North Wales Population Needs Assessment	2022
Anglesey and Gwynedd Supplementary Planning Guidance Open Spaces in New Residential Development	2019
Anglesey and Gwynedd Supplementary Planning Guidance Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities	2019
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017
Anglesey and Gwynedd Topic Paper 14: Open Space Assessment	2015
Anglesey and Gwynedd Topic Paper 13: Community Infrastructure	2015

2.3 Baseline summary

Facilities and services

2.3.1 Gwynedd is located in north-west Wales. It includes the sub-regional centre of Bangor, the urban service centres of Caernarfon, Porthmadog, Pwllheli and Blaenau Ffestiniog and several smaller centres – including (but not limited to) Abersoch and Tywyn. Gwynedd is characterised by a mix of rural, coastal, and urban environments. This mix can lead to issues with accessing services – largely linked to high travel times to key services, and poor internet connection.

2.3.2 According to the Community Infrastructure Background Paper, within Gwynedd there are:[14]

- 97 primary schools.
- 14 secondary schools.
- Two special needs schools.
- 43 GP practices.
- 21 dental practices (including private).
- 29 pharmacies.
- 21 opticians.

2.3.3 Gwynedd has one hospital – Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor, which serves the sub-region. There is also a network of four community hospitals within Gwynedd LPA and several local hospitals outside of Gwynedd that serve the community.

2.3.4 Gwynedd offers access to a range of educational facilities, reflecting the diverse nature of the authority. In total there are 7,223 pupils registered at secondary schools in Gwynedd and a further 8,815 who attend primary schools.[15]

2.3.5 The location of schools in the LPA area is shown in Figure 2.1. Primary schools are distributed throughout the plan area, with the greatest concentrations centred around urban centres. Secondary schools are predominantly located in major towns. Gwynedd residents have reasonable access to schools in neighbouring local authority areas, with a number of schools in Anglesey and several located along the north coast in Conwy, located within a 30 minute drive from Bangor.

2.3.6 Specifically, within Gwynedd, school provision includes:

- 62 Nursery, Infants & Juniors schools.
- 1 Nursery & Infants school.
- 1 Junior school.
- 1 Infants & Junior school.
- 6 Secondary schools (ages 11-19).
- 5 Secondary schools (ages 11-16).
- 2 Special schools (with post-16 provision).

2.3.7 In terms of further education, Bangor University is located within the plan area. The university was established in 1884 and has over 10,000 students across three academic colleges and 11 schools. Aberystwyth University is also located in the neighbouring Ceredigion County to the south. There are also four further education colleges located within Gwynedd.

2.3.8 In terms of community facilities, Cyngor Gwynedd owns 14 community hubs, which help residents gain access to support, information, activities and

[14] Cyngor Gwynedd (2015): 'Background Paper 13: Community Infrastructure' can be accessed here.
[15] Cyngor Gwynedd (2025)' Gwynedd schools' population' can be accessed here.

services in their community.[16] Gwynedd is also home to several other facilities, which fall under the following categories:

- Coast and countryside.
- Libraries.
- Parks and Gardens.
- Arts and Culture.
- Sports and Play.

2.3.9 The community facilities that are in the LDP area are presented in Figure 2.2, and the following inset maps provide additional detail. detail.

Access to services and housing

2.3.10 The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation combining eight different domains[17]. Of particular relevance to the Accessibility theme is the access to services domain, which addresses deprivation associated with a household's inability to access a range of services considered necessary for day-to day living. This includes services that are both physical and online / digital. The domain also has a housing focus, which identifies inadequate housing in terms of physical living conditions and availability.

2.3.11 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are standardised geographic units intended to improve the reporting of small-area statistics for England and Wales. Each LSOA typically contains 1,600 people. Within this context, there are 71 LSOAs in Gwynedd. In relation to the WIMD 2025, LSOAs are ranked out of 1,917 LSOAs in Wales, with a rank of 1 indicating the most deprived area.

2.3.12 shows the ranking of Gwynedd's LSOAs for the access to services domain, while **Table 2-2** provides additional detail on the LSOAs within Gwynedd that fall within the 50% most deprived areas in Wales.

2.3.13 An analysis of the data reveals significant barriers to services within the plan area. Regarding LSOAs, just over 71% of Gwynedd's LSOAs are ranked within the 50% most deprived LSOAs within Wales and 46% are within the 20% most deprived LSOAs in Wales. Higher levels of deprivation exist in rural areas with lower levels found in more urban areas. The high levels of deprivation found in rural areas suggest that residents in these areas struggle with physical and online access to services.

Table 2-2: LSOAs in Gwynedd Ranked Within 50 per cent Most Deprived or Worse for the Access to Services WIMD Domain

Decile	Most Deprived Indices
50% Most Deprived	5
40% Most Deprived	6
30% Most Deprived	7

[16] Cyngor Gwynedd (2026): 'Community Hubs' can be accessed here.
[17] Welsh Government (2025): 'Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025 technical report' can be accessed here.

Decile	Most Deprived Indices
20% Most Deprived	12
10% Most Deprived	21
Total	51

2.3.14 **Figure 2-4** shows the ranking of Gwynedd's LSOAs for the housing domain, while **Table 2-3**Table 2-2 below provides additional detail on the LSOAs within Gwynedd that fall within the 50% most deprived areas in Wales.

2.3.15 An analysis of the data reveals significant housing deprivation within the plan area. Regarding LSOAs, just over 83% of Gwynedd's LSOAs are ranked within the 50% most deprived LSOAs within Wales and 65% are within the 20% most deprived LSOAs in Wales. Higher levels of deprivation exist in rural areas with lower levels found in more urban areas. The high levels of deprivation found in rural areas suggest that residents in these areas struggle with inadequate housing in terms of physical living conditions and availability.

2.3.16 As Gwynedd continues to grow, it is anticipated that ensuring residents can easily access essential services such as housing, healthcare, education, and retail will remain a priority. While urban areas of Gwynedd generally experience fewer accessibility issues, higher levels of deprivation in certain LSOAs highlight challenges in reaching services, particularly in more rural areas. Addressing these disparities through targeted improvements in public transport coverage, housing availability, digital accessibility, and local service provision will help reduce barriers and improve overall access to services and housing across the area.

Table 2-3: LSOAs in Gwynedd Ranked Within 50 per cent Most Deprived or Worse for the Housing WIMD Domain

Decile	Most Deprived Indices
50% Most Deprived	1
40% Most Deprived	2
30% Most Deprived	10
20% Most Deprived	19
10% Most Deprived	27
Total	59

Transport and connectivity

2.3.17 The LDP area benefits from multi-modal transport links including road and rail links to major population centres. Whilst there is no motorway servicing the North Wales region, the A55 and the North Wales coastal railway line connects Gwynedd to the wider North Wales region and beyond. Gwynedd's existing local travel strategy operates under the North Wales Regional Transport Plan 2025-2030, managed regionally via Ambition North Wales and Cyngor Gwynedd. It is recognised that the existing Joint LDP supports

any development that maximises accessibility, but particularly by foot, cycle and public transport.

2.3.18 For further detail on transport infrastructure in Gwynedd, see **Chapter 15**.

Broadband

2.3.19 Digital connectivity has become increasingly important in the LDP area, particularly following the Covid-19 pandemic, during which many services moved online. Reliable internet access is now critical for supporting social inclusion, remote working, education, and the viability of local businesses.

2.3.20 Based on the latest Ofcom Connected Nations data (2025), full fibre broadband is available to 62% of all properties in Gwynedd[18]. This is below the average for Wales as a whole (76.2%). Despite having lower full fibre availability than Wales as a whole, just 0.8% of all properties fall below the Universal Service Obligation in the UK of at least 10Mbps download speed and 1Mbps upload speed in Gwynedd. This is below the average for the whole of Wales (2%)[19]. Digital deprivation is most apparent in rural areas of the district.

[18] OFCOM (2025) '*Data Downloads*' can be accessed through this link. See table 202507_fixed_laua_coverage.
[19] OFCOM (2025) '*Data Downloads*' can be accessed through this link. See table 202507_fixed_coverage_UK_and_Nations.

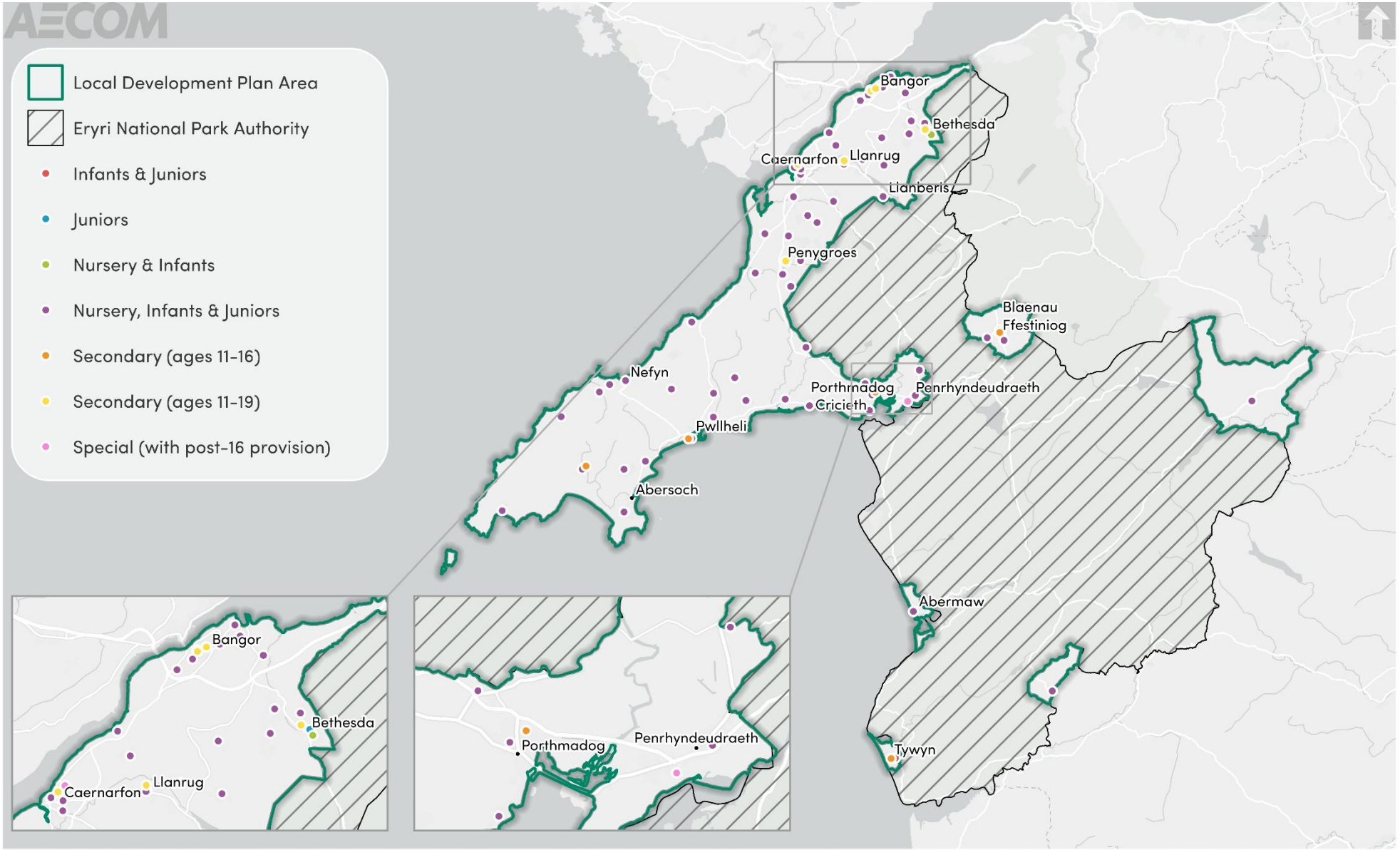

Figure 2-1: Schools in Gwynedd LDP Area

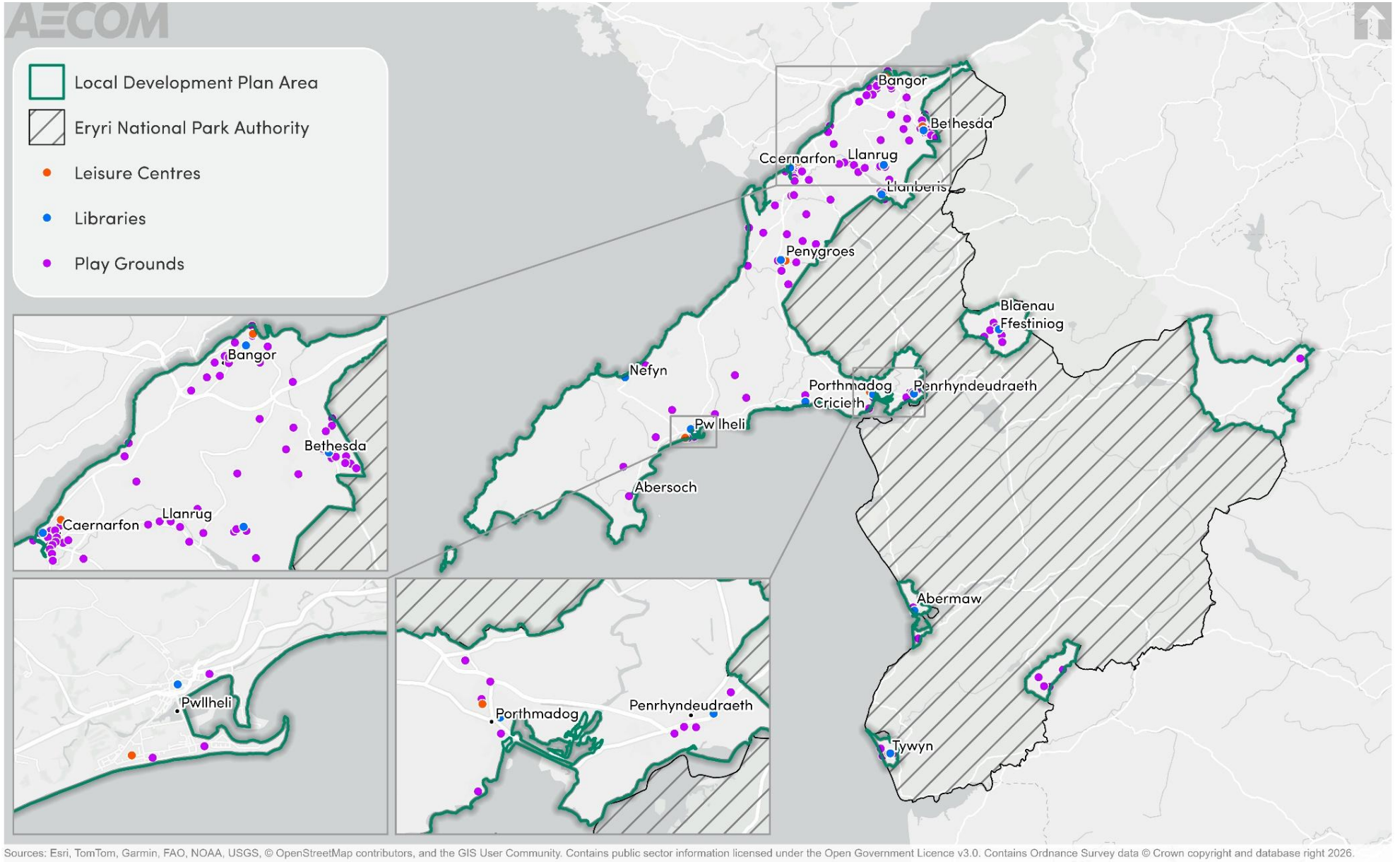

Figure 2-2: Community facilities in Gwynedd LDP Area

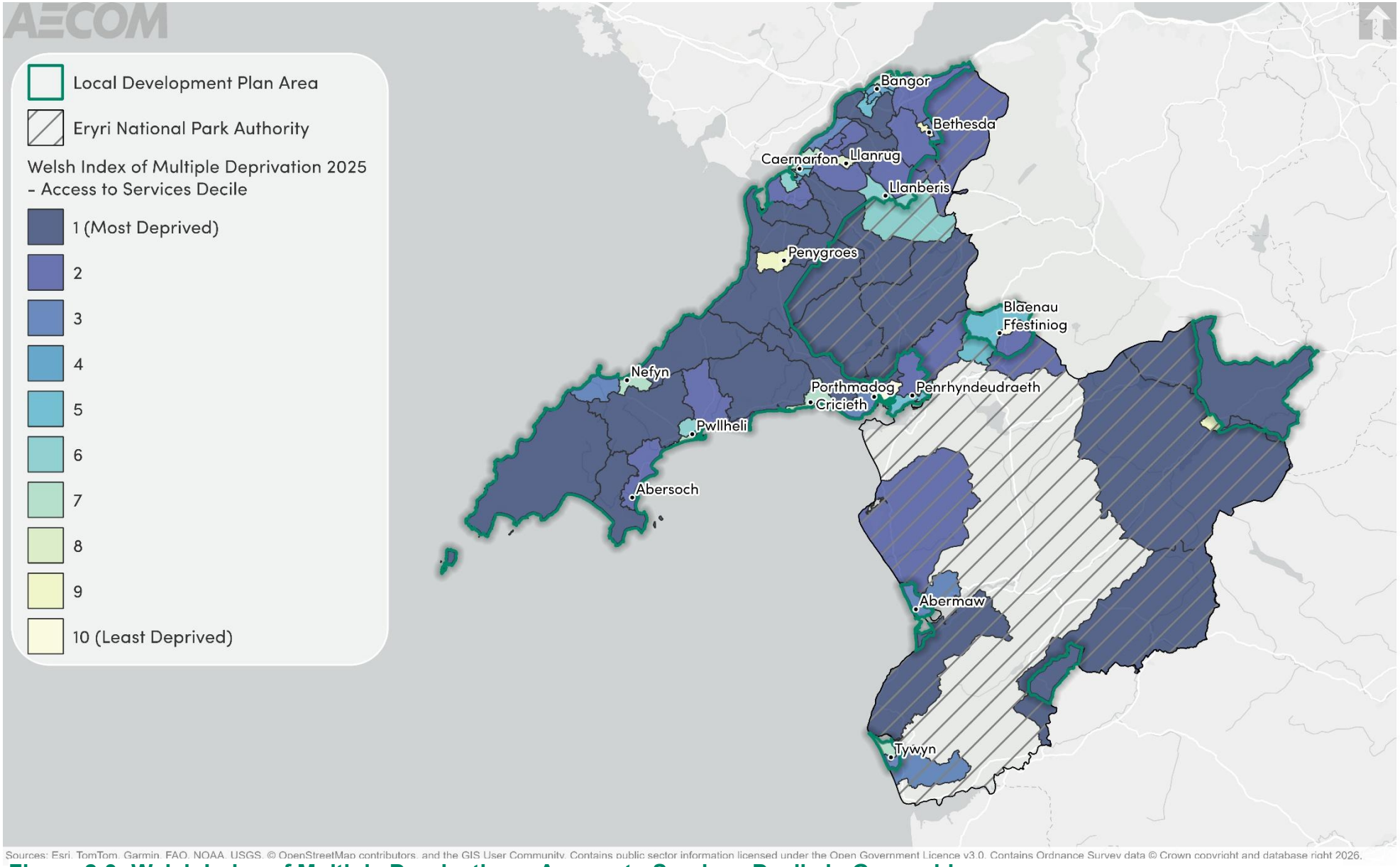

Figure 2-3: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – Access to Services Decile in Gwynedd

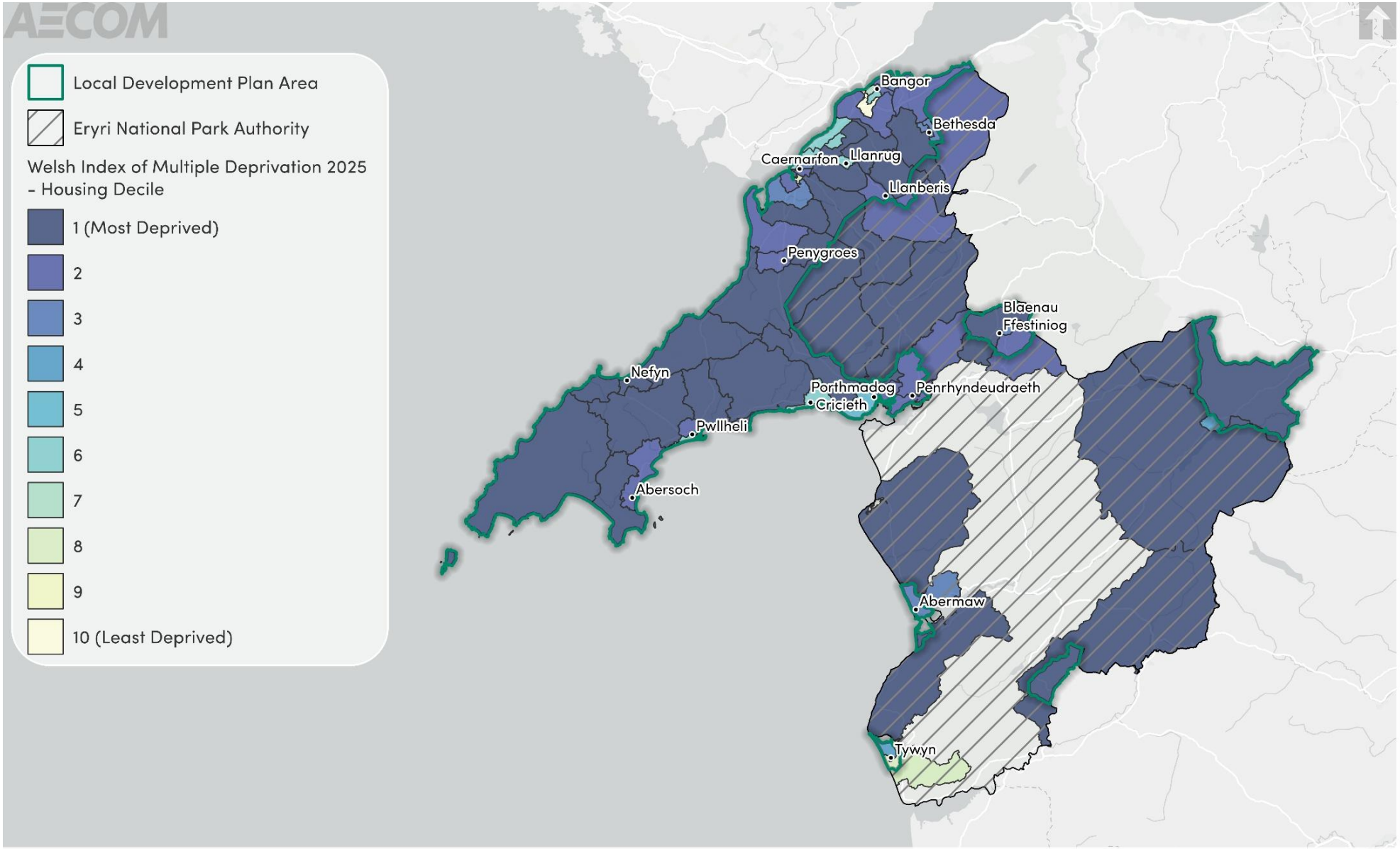

Figure 2-4: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – Housing Decile in Gwynedd

2.4 Future baseline

2.4.1 Following the Covid-19 pandemic, homeworking has become a more prevalent trend, and this is likely to alter the commuting patterns and access trends of residents into the future. Whilst uncertainty remains, the LDP provides opportunities to guide development which accommodates for changing working patterns and lifestyles, and places greater emphasis on access to local services, facilities and employment options and strategic connectivity.

2.4.2 Population growth is expected to lead to an increased demand for facilities and services throughout the LDP area. Uncoordinated development in the absence of the GLDP may fail to meet adequate provision of these services in more deprived areas.

2.4.3 The emerging LDP offers the opportunity to promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise encounter each other - for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages.

2.4.4 As digital infrastructure improves, ensuring equal access to digital services (e.g., online healthcare appointments, remote education) will become increasingly important. Addressing digital accessibility within the more rural areas of the district, especially for older residents and those with disabilities, will be a priority.

2.5 Key issues

2.5.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- An increase in work from home and hybrid working patterns will need to be reflected in local planning policy.
- Inequalities in access to digital infrastructure can place certain socio-economic groups at a disadvantage. As reliance on digital platforms for employment, services and communication continues to increase, there is a risk that those without adequate access or digital capability may widen existing inequalities.
- There are a high proportion of residents living in villages and outlying areas dealing with rural isolation, older demographics, and limited services where growth must also be balanced against European and nationally protected areas.
- A significant proportion of LDP area's residents experience access to services and housing deprivation. This is particularly pronounced in rural areas. Employment developments and new housing of various tenures, types and sizes should be well-integrated with existing transport and service networks, reducing travel distances and enhancing service and housing accessibility for residents.

- In total, 48% of properties within Gwynedd do not have access to full fibre internet. Furthermore, 0.8% of all properties fall below the Universal Service Obligation in the UK of at least 10Mbps download speed and 1Mbps upload speed.

2.6 ISA objective

2.6.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy / proposal help to:
Improve accessibility to essential services and facilities across the LDP area	• Increase the availability of accessible, inclusive, and interconnected green and blue open spaces for nature for everyone within a 15-minute walk from home? • Reduce inequalities in access to essential services across the LDP area, particularly in its most deprived areas? • Ensure access to services and infrastructure for all population groups, including older people, disabled people, and those without access to private vehicles? • Improve opportunities for walking and cycling to access essential services and facilities contributing to the principles of 'liveable neighbourhoods'? • Support the development, expansion or enhancement of existing facilities where needed? • Connect new housing and employment development with healthcare, educational, and community services and facilities? • Enhance digital connectivity and inclusion to ensure all residents can access online services and opportunities? • Ensure the capacity of educational facilities keep pace with population growth?

3. Air quality and noise

3.1 Introduction to theme

3.1.1 This theme focuses on local air quality within the LDP area. This includes sources of air pollution, air quality hotspots, and areas known to exceed objectives for air quality. This theme also looks at local sources of noise pollution.

3.2 Policy context

3.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 3-1**.

Table 3-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to air quality

Document title	Year of publication
NW Authorities Collaborative Project 2024 Air Quality Progress Report	2024
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017

3.3 Baseline summary

Air quality

3.3.1 Cyngor Gwynedd does not monitor air quality independently; rather, it is one of six local authorities that monitor the North Wales region collectively. The other local authorities that form the North Wales Authorities alongside Cyngor Gwynedd are:

- Isle of Anglesey County Council.
- Denbighshire County Council.
- Wrexham County Borough Council.
- Conwy County Borough Council.
- Flintshire County Council.

3.3.2 According to the latest available Air Quality Progress Report for the North Wales Authorities, there are no declared air quality management areas (AQMAs) within Gwynedd or the wider North Wales area.

3.3.3 Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) is a result of the high temperature combustion of fuels, such as those used for heating, transportation, industry, and power generation.[20] It is often associated with roadside pollution linked to vehicle movements.

[20] World Health Organisation (2026): 'Air quality, energy and health' can be accessed here.

3.3.4 According to the 2024 Air Quality Progress Report, Cyngor Gwynedd undertook passive monitoring of NO_2 at 17 sites during 2023:

- Seven of these are located in Caernarfon.
- Five of these are located in Bangor.
- One is located in proximity to Bethesda.
- One is located in Dinas.
- One in located in Pwllheli.
- Two are located in Llanfor on the outskirts of Bala.

3.3.5 None of these monitoring sites reported an exceedance in the annual mean NO_2 objective of 40µg/m^3 in 2023. Furthermore, the 2024 Air Quality Progress Report demonstrates that NO_2 measured at these monitoring locations has been declining since 2019 – though it is recognised that some monitoring locations reported higher levels of NO_2 in 2023 compared with 2022.

3.3.6 The 2024 Air Quality Progress Report also indicates that Cyngor Gwynedd reported no new road traffic sources of air pollution in 2023, nor did it report any new industrial, fugitive or uncontrolled sources or commercial sources of air pollution in 2023. However, the 2024 Air Quality Progress Report does indicate that Cyngor Gwynedd received 70 complaints related to air quality in 2023:

- 46 were due to domestic bonfires.
- Four were due to smoke from domestic chimneys.
- Eleven were due to smoke from industrial bonfires.
- Two were due to smoke from industrial chimneys.
- Six were due to dust from commercial, industrial or building activities.
- One was due to air pollution linked to vehicle exhausts.

Noise

3.3.7 Unwanted or harmful sound has the potential to disrupt sleep and increase stress, irritation and fatigue, as well as interfere with important activities such as learning, working and relaxing. Additionally, exposure to loud sounds can cause immediate or gradual hearing damage, and could also increase the risk of hypertension-related illnesses and cardiovascular disease.[21]

3.3.8 **Figure 3-1** shows the extent of noise pollution in Gwynedd relating to the road network. The highest levels of noise pollution can be found along the A55, A4871, A499, A497, A470, A496 and the A4212. Urban areas that are more prone to congestion are also hotspots for noise associated with the road network within Gwynedd.

3.3.9 There is also a more limited amount of noise associated with the rail network in Gwynedd (**Figure 3-2**). Rail noise tends to be more prevalent in urban

[21] WHO (2011): 'Burden of disease from environmental noise: quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe' can be accessed here.

areas, with Bangor experiencing the greatest level of noise pollution from the rail network compared to other settlements.

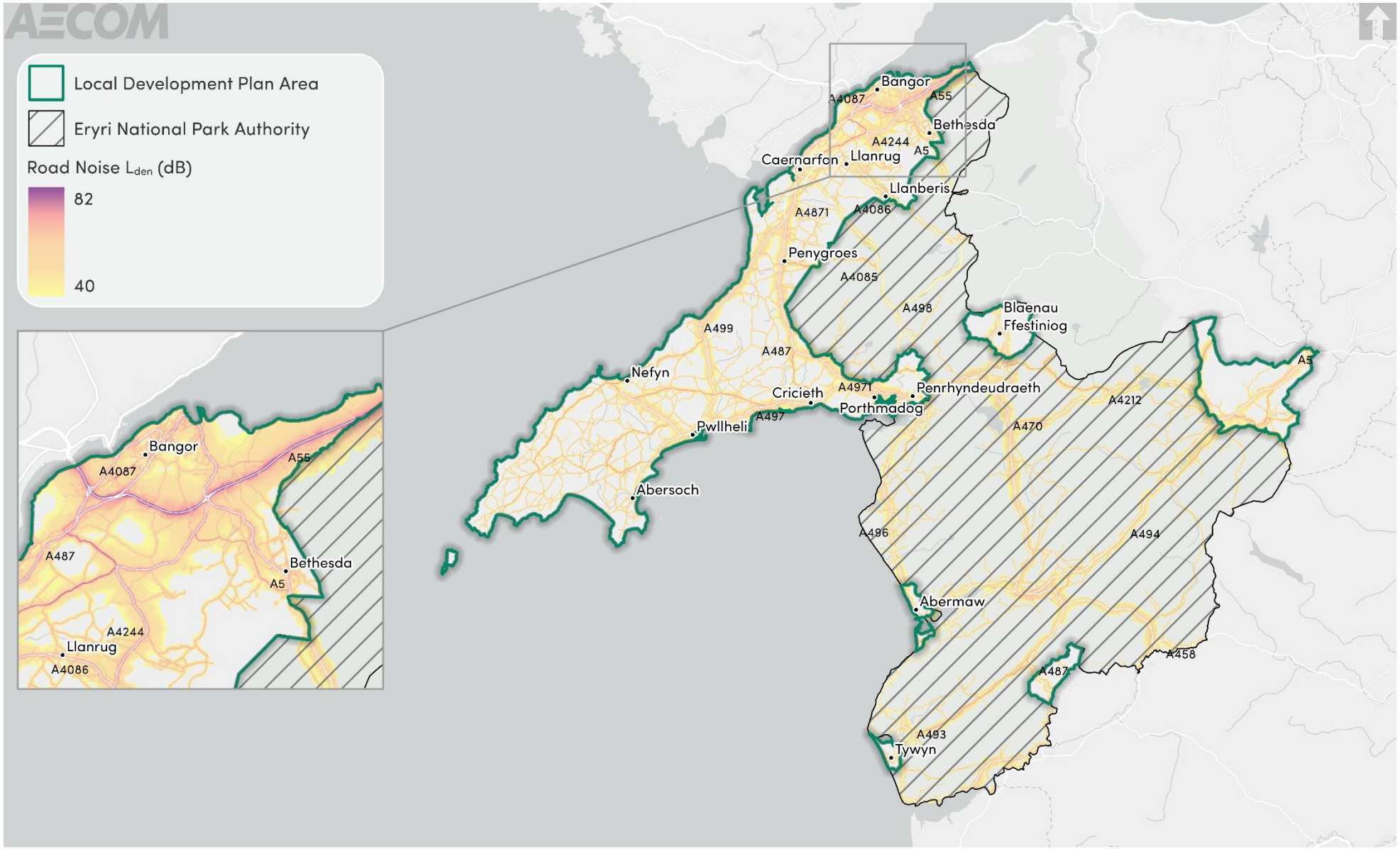

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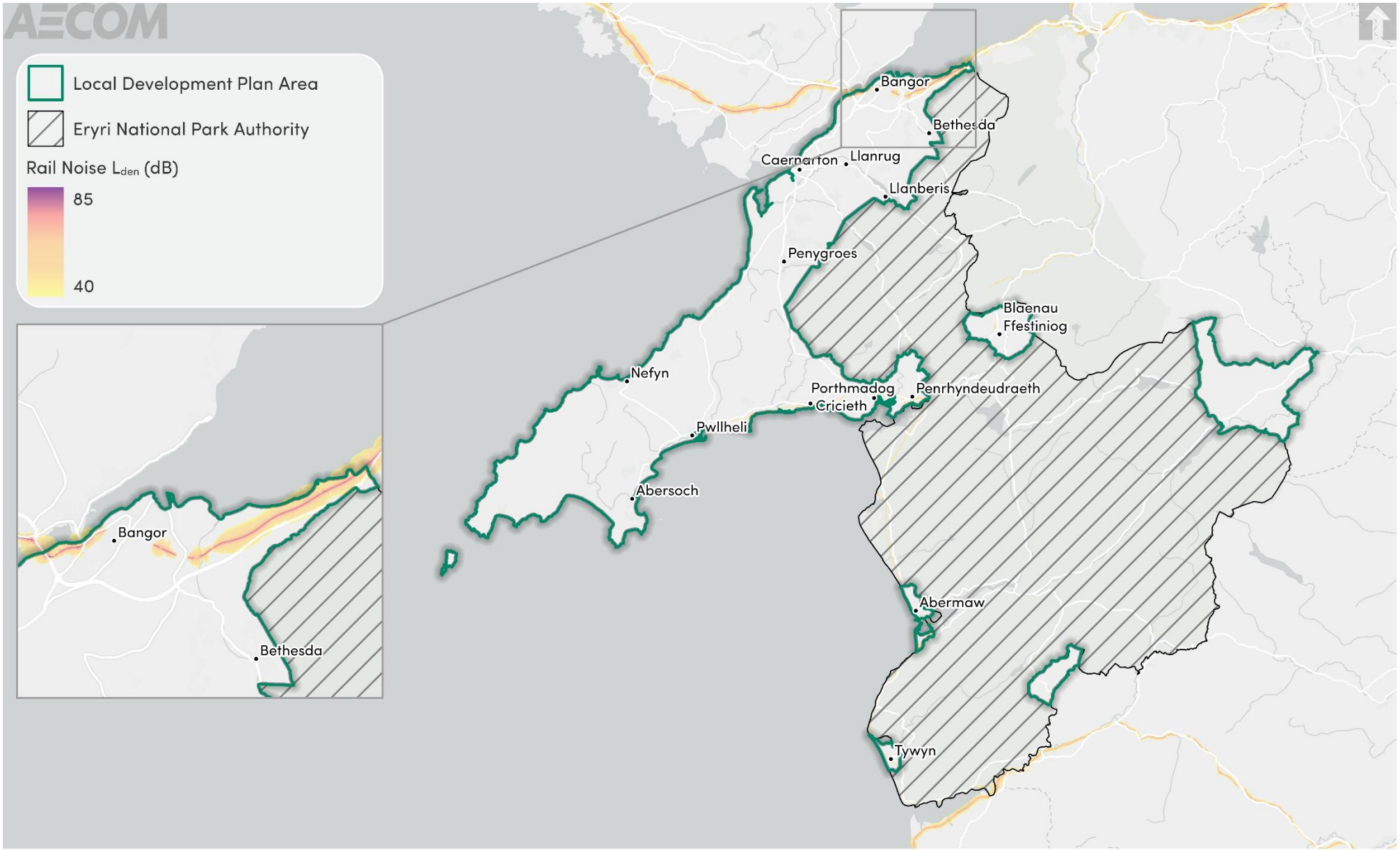
Figure 3-1: Road noise in Gwynedd.



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026.

Figure 3-2: Rail noise in Gwynedd.

3.4 Future baseline

3.4.1 The growth associated with future development within the plan area has the potential for adverse effects on air quality and noise in the short to medium term, due to construction activities and increased levels of traffic and associated pollutants. In absence of the GLDP the continued adoption of low-emission vehicles alongside national policy should contribute towards improving noise pollution and air quality, supporting opportunities to improve accessibility, particularly in terms of the use of sustainable modes of transport (including active travel modes, working from home and electric vehicle use).

3.4.2 However, it is possible that development could contribute towards improving air quality in the LDP area. This could be achieved through improving accessibility to key services and facilities, and encouraging a greater uptake in active and sustainable transportation engagement where possible and appropriate. Additionally, a shift towards low-emission and electric vehicles could also contribute towards improving air quality over the long-term.

3.5 Key issues

3.5.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- There are no AQMAs within the Cyngor Gwynedd area. Additionally, monitoring of NO_2 levels shows an overall declining trend, though it is noted that some monitoring locations measured greater levels of NO_2 in 2023 when compared to 2022 which could need continued monitoring and consideration in growth proposals.
- Future development may increase air pollution through construction and traffic-related emissions linked to an intensification of activity in the LDP area. However, future development also presents opportunities to improve accessibility to services and encourage an uptake in active and sustainable development, which could help to reduce air pollutants associated with travel.
- Noise pollution in the LDP area is largely driven by the road network, with the highest levels along major transport routes and urban areas. Noise from the rail network is less extensive and more prevalent in urban areas, with Bangor experiencing the greatest level of noise pollution from the rail network compared to other settlements.

3.7 ISA objective

3.7.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objective	Assessment questions – will the option / proposal help to:
Identify and pursue any opportunities to reduce, or at least, minimise population exposure to air pollution and noise nuisance?	• Reduce the need to travel? • Encourage journeys to be made by sustainable means (active travel or public transport)? • Avoid any adverse effects on air quality and for people exposed to poor air quality? • Improve air quality in areas identified as of concern? • Promote and facilitate the use of electric vehicles? • Promote good design to avoid impacts on air quality and reduce noise? • Protect, incorporate and enhance green infrastructure networks to facilitate increased absorption and dissipation of NO_2?

4. Biodiversity and geodiversity

4.1 Introduction to theme

4.1.1 This theme focuses on biodiversity and geodiversity interests within and in proximity to the LDP area. This includes designations and habitats.

4.2 Policy context

4.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity

Document title	Year of publication
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017
Natur Gwynedd Biodiversity Action Plan	2004

4.3 Baseline summary

Internationally designated sites

4.3.1 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Ramsar sites are designated biodiversity assets of international importance, which are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Act (2010). Within the Gwynedd administrative boundaries are the following designated sites, as shown on **Figure 4-1**:

- Y Twyni o Abermenai i Aberffraw / Abermenai to Aberffraw Dunes
- Y Fenai a Bae Conwy / Menai Strait and Conwy Bay
- Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau / Lleyn Peninsula and the Sarnau
- Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt
- Eryri / Snowdonia
- Corsydd Llyn / Lleyn Fens
- Corsydd Eifionydd / Eifionydd Fens
- Coedydd Derw a Safleoedd Ystlumod Meirion / Meirionnydd Oakwoods and Bat Sites
- Coedydd Aber
- Clogwyni Pen Llyn / Seacliffs of Lleyn
- Berwyn a Mynyddoedd De Clwyd / Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains
- Afon Gwyrfai a Llyn Cwellyn

- Glynllifon
- River Dee and Bala Lake / Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn Tegid (Wales)
- West Wales Marine / Gorllewin Cymru Forol
- Berwyn
- Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt
- Mynydd Cilan, Trwyn y Wylfa ac Ynysoedd Sant Tudwal
- Traeth Lafan / Lavan Sands, Conway Bay
- Glannau Aberdaron ac Ynys Enlli / Aberdaron Coast and Bardsey Island
- Northern Cardigan Bay / Gogledd Bae Ceredigion
- Corsydd Môn a Llyn / Anglesey and Llyn Fens

Nationally designated sites

4.3.2 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are nationally designated areas that protect the UK's most important wildlife, habitats, and geological features. National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are a selection of the most significant SSSIs, established to conserve key habitats, species, and geology, and to support scientific research, education, and public understanding of the natural environment. SSSIs and NNRs are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

4.3.3 There are 80 SSSIs present in Gwynedd, as shown in **Figure 4-2**.

4.3.4 There are also six National Nature Reserves (NNRs) within or partially within Gwynedd. These are:

- Coed Tremadog
- Cors Geirch
- Cors Gyfelog
- Morfa Harlech (Also Within Eryri National Park).
- Ynys Enlli
- Yr Eifl

4.3.5 Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS) are non-statutory sites selected to protect the most important places for geology, geomorphology and soils, complementing the network of legally protected SSSIs. RIGS are selected for their scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic features.[22] In total, there are 20 RIGS located within Gwynedd, as shown in **Figure 4-3**.

Locally designated sites

4.3.6 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. They are designated to conserve locally significant natural habitats, species, and geological

[22] DataMapWales (2022): 'Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS)' can be accessed here.

features. They provide accessible green spaces for community enjoyment, education, and engagement, while also serving as valuable sites for local ecological research and conservation efforts. Gwynedd's LNRs are spread across 1,700 hectares of land, and work to protect important habitats and species. There are currently eight LNRs[23], as shown in **Figure 4-3**.

4.3.7 It is also noted that there are a number of wildlife sites within Gwynedd. Confirmed wildlife sites are shown in Error! Reference source not found..

Priority habitats and species

Species

4.3.8 There are a number of important species within the LDP area – some of these have local importance, and some have importance within Wales and in a UK context. 19 of these species have species actions plans under the Natur Gwynedd Biodiversity Action Plan – including mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, invertebrates, and plants.

4.3.9 One species that has an action plan is the otter, which have been returning to many river catchments in the LDP area in recent years. European otters (*Lutra lutra*) are important biological indicators of the health of rivers and wetlands – as a top predator, monitoring their status gives a valuable measure of the state of water and wetland ecosystems. The species action plan outlines objectives to establish the species' status and distribution, to protect, maintain and enhance their populations and associated habitats, and to reduce the accidental death of otters on roads and in rivers, largely linked to human activity.[24]

4.3.10 Another species with an action plan is the chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*). In 2002 there were 67 sites occupied by chough pairs in Gwynedd, and their population had been increasing. Some areas within Gwynedd are of vital importance as feeding and roosting areas for young and non-breeding birds, especially structures linked to quarry activity and mine working (active and disused). The associated species action plan outlines objectives to protect important sites and habitats for the chough population, and seeks to promote a better understanding of their needs – through education and through the sharing of best land practices.[25]

Habitats

4.3.11 The Natur Gwynedd Biodiversity Action Plan identifies 15 habitats that has associated habitat action plans. This includes habitats that span coastal, grassland, wetland, and woodland habitat types:

- Upland oaklands.
- Wet woodland.
- Arable field margins.
- Cloddiau.
- Mudflats.

[23] Cyngor Gwynedd (2026): 'Local Nature Reserves' can be accessed here.
[24] Cyngor Gwynedd (2004): 'Otter Species Action Plan' can be accessed here.
[25] Cyngor Gwynedd (2004): 'Chough Species Action Plan' can be accessed here.

- Maritime cliff and slopes.
- River corridors.
- Rhos pasture.
- Lowland heathland.
- Upland heathland.
- Lowland meadows and pasture.
- Lowland dry acid grassland.
- Lowland wetlands.
- Strandlines.
- Gardens.

4.3.12 Cloddiau is a type of boundary particularly characteristic of the Llŷn Peninsula. Cloddiau are raised earth banks, usually stone faced, and sometimes have a hedge planted on top. They have significant local importance and ecological value, and frequently support a range of bankside and hedgerow flora, invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and small mammals. They are not necessarily protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997[26] and as such are vulnerable to removal and lack of appropriate maintenance / management.[27]

[26] GOV.UK (1997): 'The Hedgerow Regulations 1997' can be accessed here.
[27] Cyngor Gwynedd (2004): 'Cloddiau Habitat Action Plan' can be accessed here.

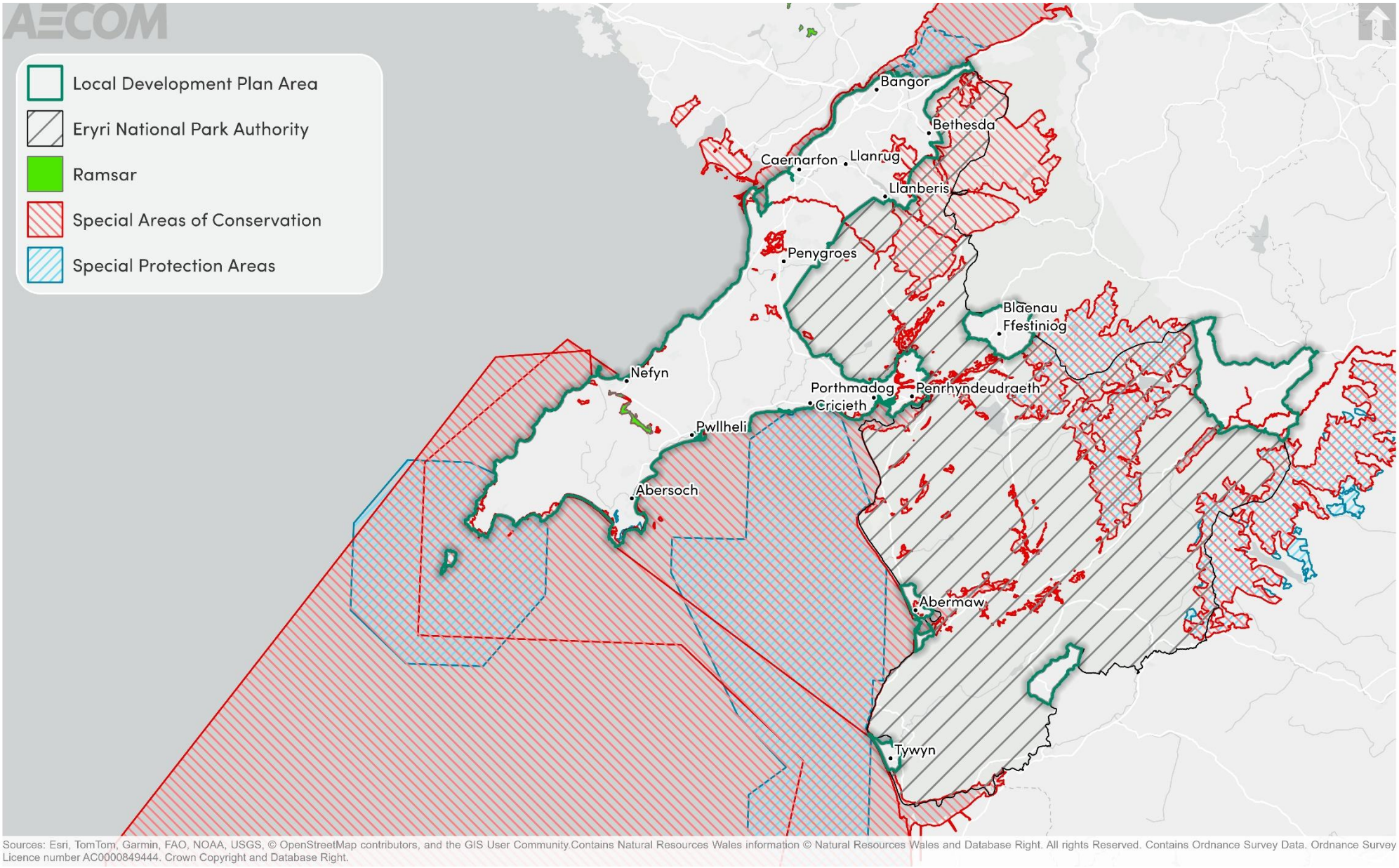


Figure 4-1: Internationally designated sites within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP Area

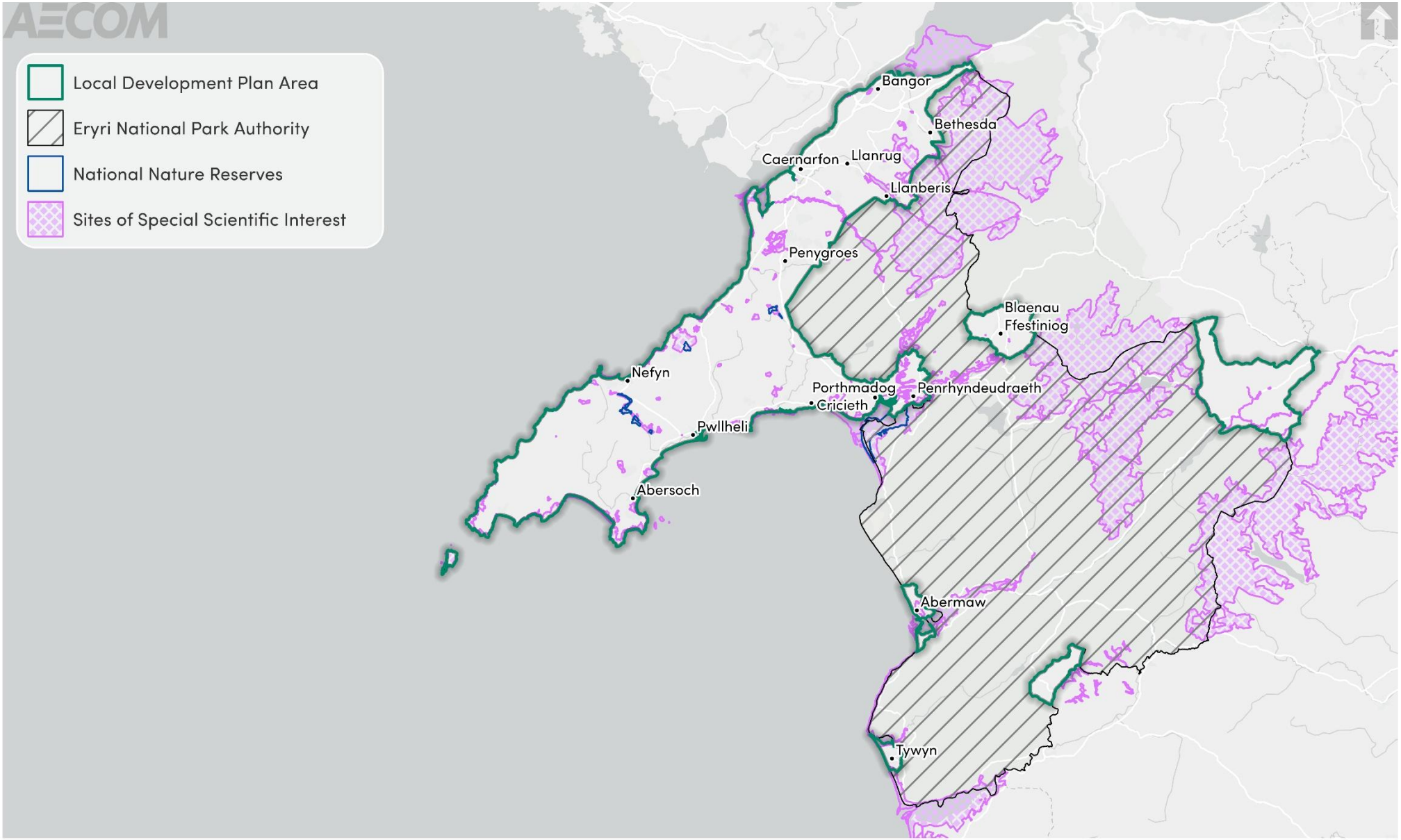


Figure 4-2: Nationally designated sites within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP Area

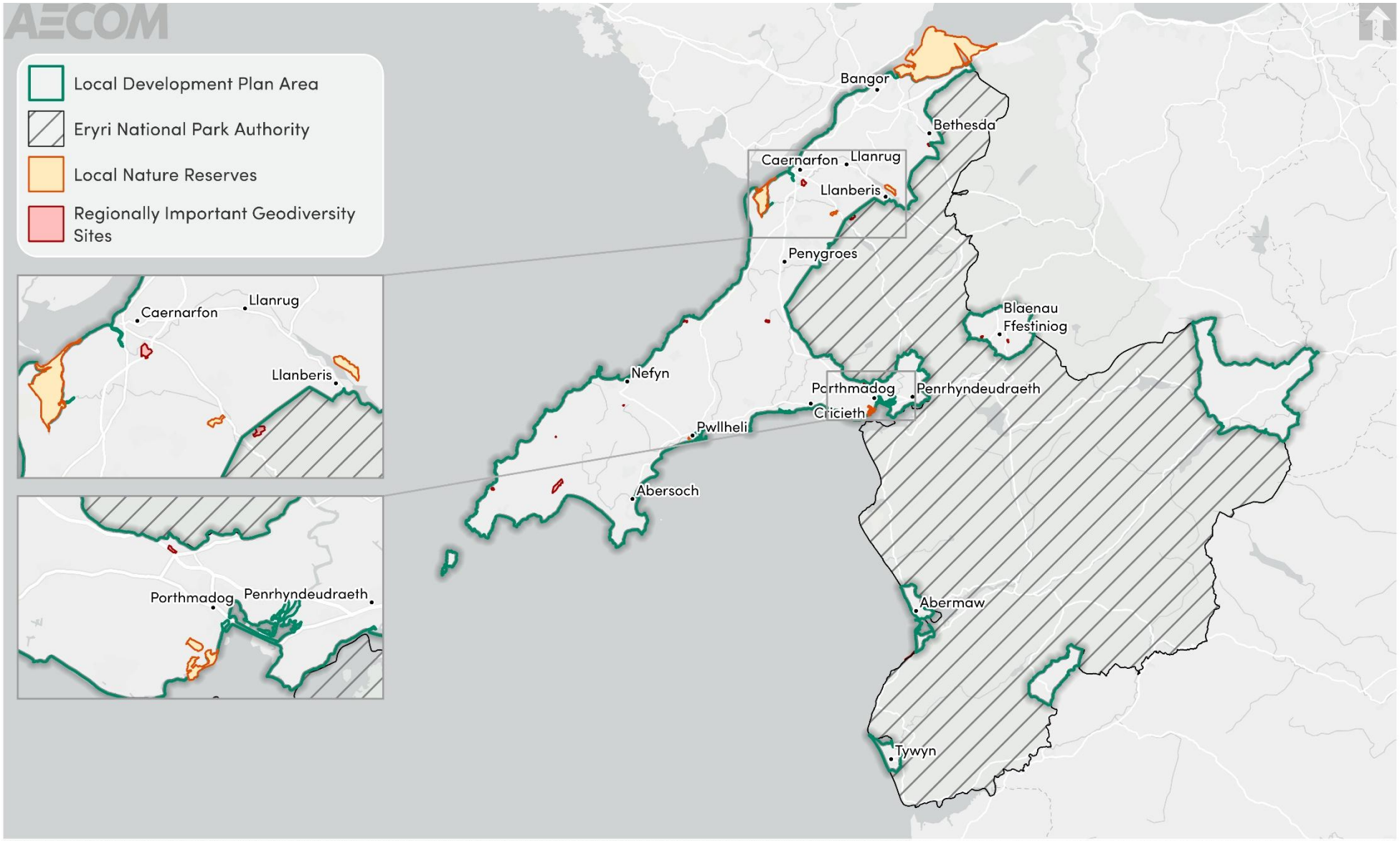


Figure 4-3: Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites and Local Nature Reserves within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area

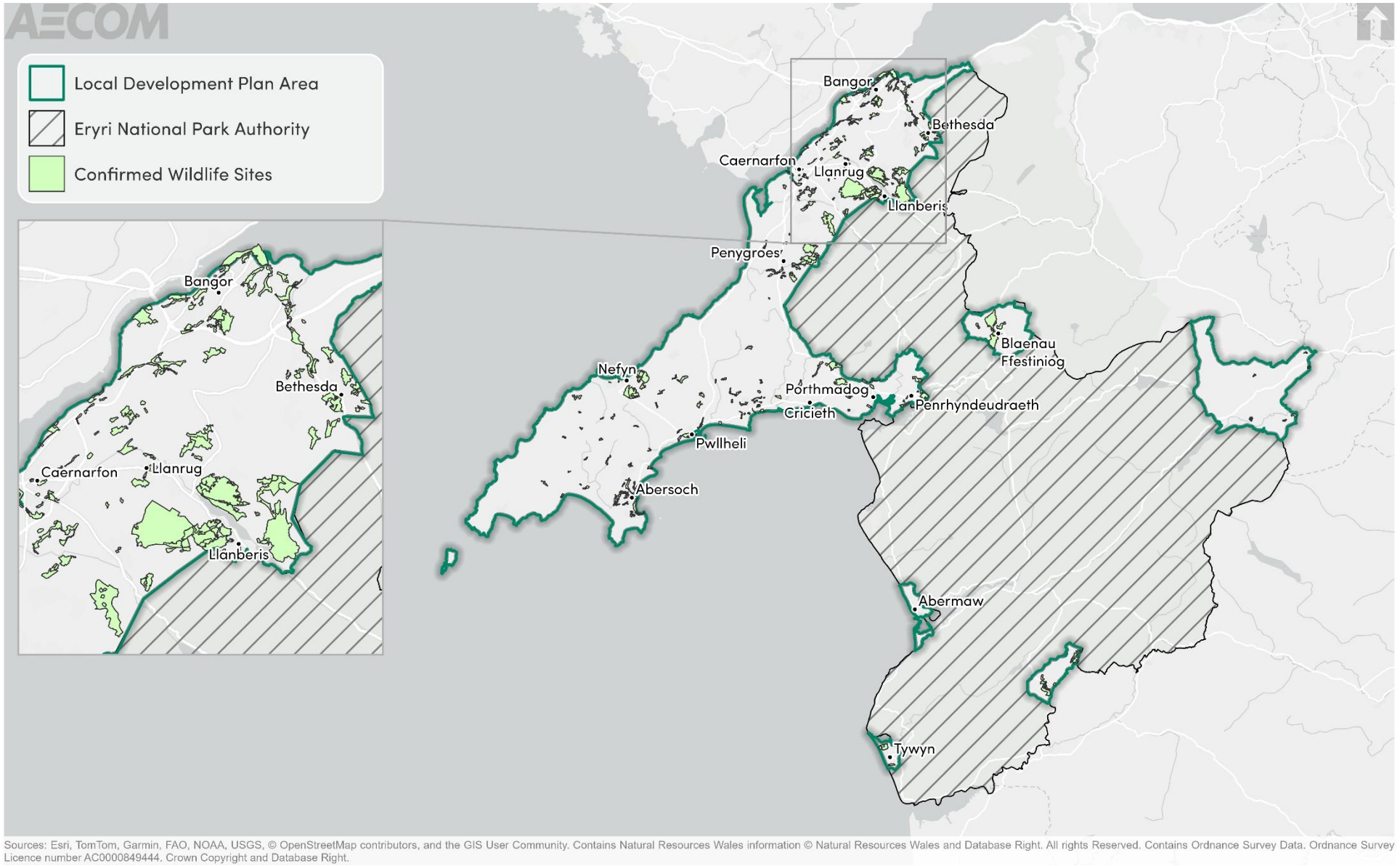


Figure 4-4: Confirmed wildlife sites

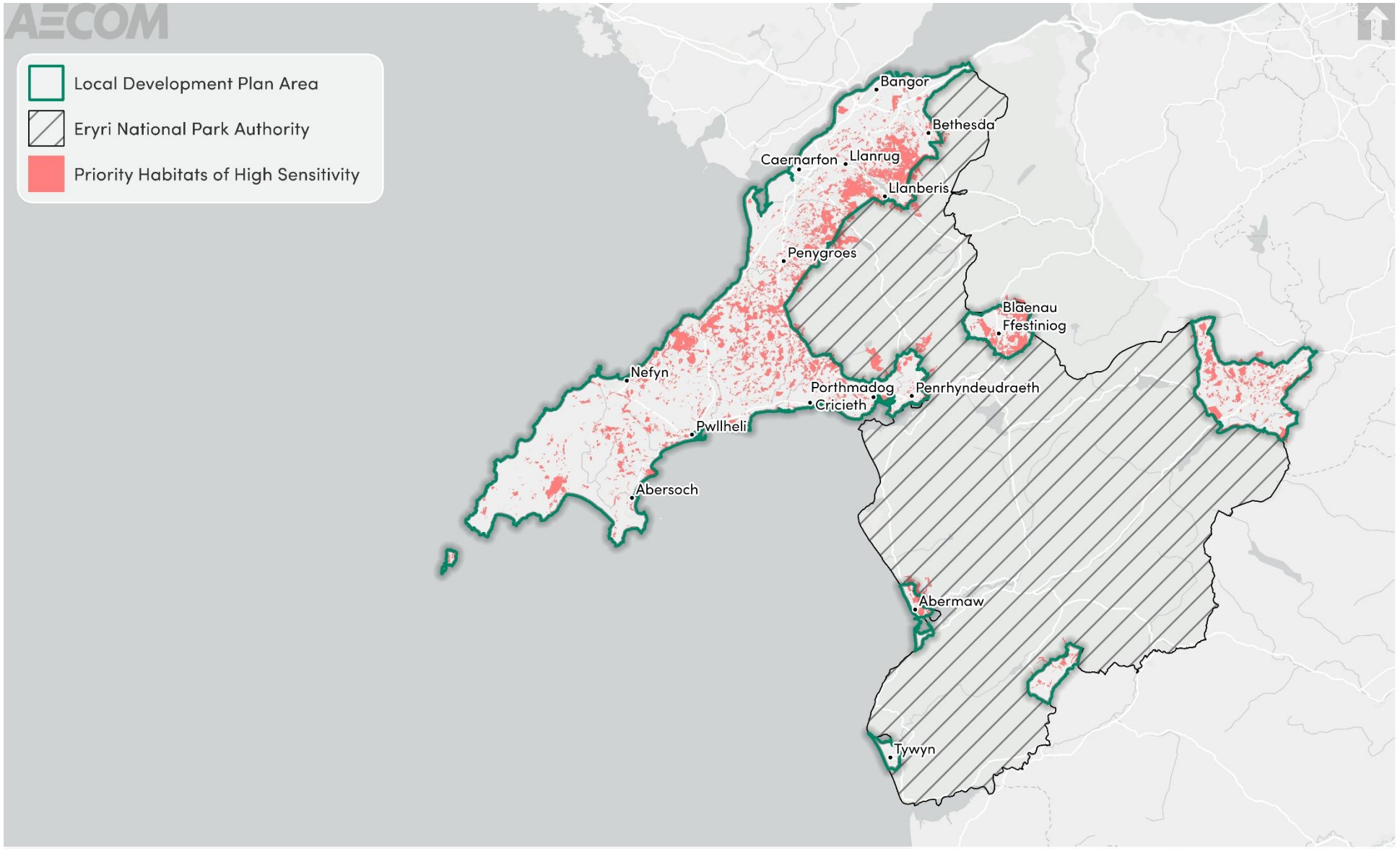


Figure 4-5: Priority Habitats of High Sensitivity within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area

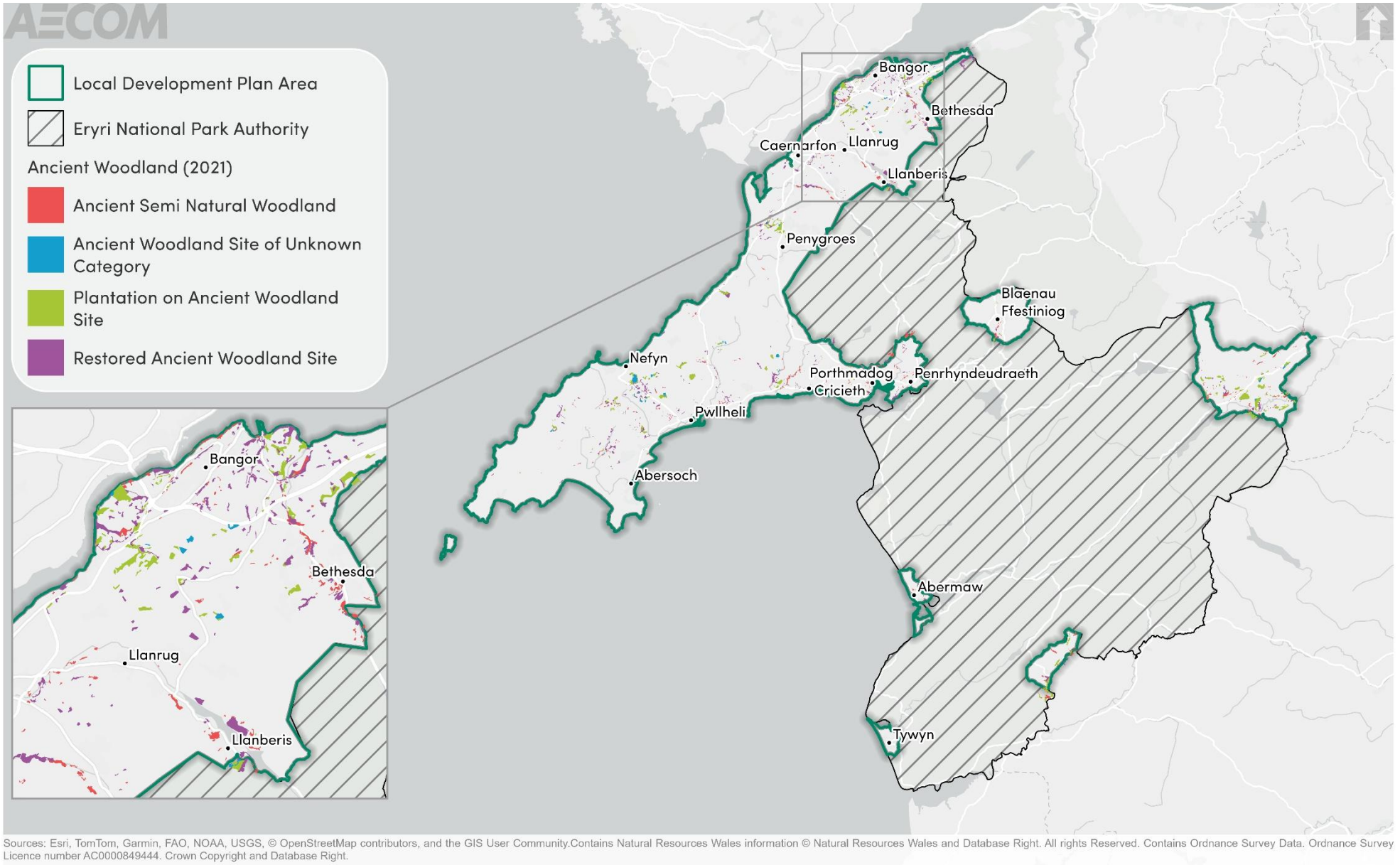


Figure 4-6: Ancient woodland within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP Area

4.4 Future baseline

4.4.1 Biodiversity and geodiversity designations in the LDP area have the potential to experience an increase in pressure associated with potential new growth. For example, this could include an increase in recreational disturbances (both occurrences and intensity / effects) linked to an increase in people accessing the more undeveloped, natural spaces in the LDP area – especially along the coastline. Disturbances could also be linked to an increase in noise and light pollution associated with the provision of new housing, employment, and infrastructure.

4.4.2 It is possible that growth could also lead to biodiversity fragmentation or loss, depending on the location of new development. This could include the loss of habitats as a result of new development, and impacts to the biodiversity network due to disruption to biodiversity corridors. This could have an impact on wider habitats and species across the LDP area.

4.4.3 Benefits for biodiversity have the potential to arise from the increasing integration of biodiversity considerations within forward planning and efforts to protect and improve green infrastructure networks across the plan area, and regionally. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats but the connections between them.

4.4.4 Without the LDP, speculative development would continue to come forward under the currently adopted Joint LDP. The LDP provides an opportunity to coordinate the delivery of growth to meet future needs, protect and minimise impacts on biodiversity and seek strategic opportunities to deliver biodiversity net gain where possible.

4.5 Key issues

4.5.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- There are a number of designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites within and proximity to the LDP area, including Ramsars, SPAs, SACs, SSSIs, NNRs, RIGS, LNRs, and wildlife sites. It will be important to ensure that new development does not undermine the integrity of these designations.
- There are many important habitats and species present within the LDP area, some of which have an associated action plan under the Natur Gwynedd Biodiversity Action Plan 2004. Though it is possible that some of these action plans are outdated given their publication date, it will be important for them to be fully considered through any new development. This will likely contribute to ensuring that objectives are integrated and development is positioned to secure biodiversity benefits.
- Future development should seek to maximise opportunities for biodiversity net gain by seeking improvements to the biodiversity network, and reducing the potential for harm where possible. In turn, this will likely bring positive effects by reducing the potential for habitat and species loss and fragmentation.

4.6 ISA objectives

4.6.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objectives	Assessment questions – will the option / proposal help to:
Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within and surrounding the LDP area.	• Minimise impacts on designated and important biodiversity and geodiversity features, and provide biodiversity net gains where possible? • Increase access to and understanding of important biodiversity and geodiversity designations, including understanding of their contribution to the biodiversity network in the LDP area? • Protect and enhance the biodiversity network, including considering links that cross administrative boundaries? • Support opportunities for green infrastructure delivery, which can have benefits for wildlife by connecting habitats and avoiding habitat fragmentation? •

5. Climate change adaptation

5.1 Introduction to theme

5.1.1 This theme focuses on activities in the LDP area that contribute to climate change and its associated effects, including flood risk.

5.2 Policy context

5.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 5-1**.

Table 5-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change adaptation

Document title	Year of publication
The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan	2023
Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022-2030	2022
Gwynedd Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	2013

5.3 Baseline summary

5.3.1 Climate change is predicted to have effects relating to short-term changes to weather patterns as well as longer-term shifts in climatic trends. Weather patterns are predicted to see an increase in extreme weather events, including intense rainfall, heating, drought and cold snaps. Changes to climate are likely to lead to mean reductions in rainfall alongside mean increases in temperatures. In Wales, mean summer temperatures are projected to increase by approximately 4°C by 2080, while mean winter temperatures are expected to ride by around 2.4°C between 2026 and 2080. Precipitation patterns are also expected to shift, with mean winter precipitation increasing by 0.98 mm/day and summer precipitation decreasing by approximately 0.9 mm/day over the same period[28].

5.3.2 Another consequence of climate change is rising sea levels, an issue which is exacerbated by storm surges which can lead to coastal flooding and erosion. Climate change adaptation refers to the actions taken to manage impacts of climate change by reducing vulnerability and exposure to its harmful effects, as well as exploiting any potential benefits.

Flood risk

5.3.3 Cyngor Gwynedd has a role as the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA). As LLFA, the Council have a responsibility to control the risk of flooding from surface water, ground water and from smaller streams. To fulfil this role, the Council works closely with the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales

[28] Met Office (2018). '*UK Climate Projections*' can be accessed through this link.

and other local authorities to develop a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS).

5.3.4 The Gwynedd LFRMS (2013) sets out how flood risk will be managed through a coordinated, risk-based approach that recognises that flooding cannot be fully prevented but can be reduced and better managed. The key priorities of the plan include improvements to the understanding of flood risk, promoting sustainable drainage systems, maintaining coastal assets, strengthening collaboration between authorities, and guiding development away from flood-prone areas. A new LFRMS was completed in early 2024, but is not yet publicly available.

5.3.5 Main river flooding is one of the principal causes for flooding within Gwynedd. As shown in **Figure 5-1** fluvial and coastal flood risk extends throughout Gwynedd, mainly following the river corridors and in areas along the coastline. The larger communities that are at highest risk from flooding are Porthmadog, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Pwllheli.

5.3.6 Coastal flood risk is also of concern within Gwynedd. Future projections for sea level rise of the coast of Gwynedd estimate sea level rise of up to 0.58 metres by 2100 under a Shared Socioeconomic Pathway (SSP) 2-4.5 scenario, [29] relative to a 1995-2014 baseline.[30] A rise in sea levels leads to an increase in tide and wave levels, coastal erosion, and frequency and severity of flooding and storm surges, placing coastal communities such as those at Pwllheli, Fairbourne, Porthmadog or Tywyn at greater risk.

5.3.7 Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) are non-statutory documents that set out a shared strategic approach for managing the coastline from Coastal flooding to erosion risks. Their aim is to reduce the risks to people, the developed, historic and natural environments over the next century. The Cyngor Gwynedd LDP is located within the West of Wales Coastal Group SMP.[31]

5.3.8 The LFRMS identifies surface water flooding as a significant contributor to flood risk in Gwynedd. The LFRMS estimates that 9,100 properties were at risk of surface water flooding in Gwynedd in 2013. **Figure 5-2** shows that surface water flood risk in Gwynedd is widespread. Higher risk areas are observed within both rural and urban environments, including within Bangor and Gwynedd's Urban Service Centres.

5.3.9 The LFRMS concluded that ground water flooding is not considered to be a significant source of flooding in Gwynedd, although there may be some localised issues throughout the county.

Flood alert areas and flood defences

5.3.10 **Figure 5-3** shows areas in the LDP area that benefit from flood defences that protect against flooding from Rivers and the Sea. These are located in areas that are more prone to flooding, especially along the western coastline.

[29] SSP 2-4.5 is a scenario in which there is intermediate GHG emissions with CO_2 emissions around current levels until 2050, then falling but not reaching net zero by 2100.
[30] NASA (2025): 'Sea Level Projection Tool' can be accessed here.
[31] West of Wales Coastal Group (no date): 'SMP2' can be accessed here.

5.3.11 As of March 2025, Cyngor Gwynedd announced that they were to receive £3.8 million from the Welsh Government for flood alleviation projects. The main communities expected to benefit from this funding are: Bontnewydd, Caernarfon and Mynydd Llandegai.[32]

Green infrastructure

5.3.12 Natural solutions to reducing flood risk can come in the form of green infrastructure, including tree cover. Permeable surfaces provided by greenspace help to reduce surface water runoff, which in turn helps to reduce flood risk. Trees provide interception, reducing the volume of water reaching the ground during rainfall events, helping to reduce flood risk. In this sense, it is important to look at the levels of green infrastructure and its management within urban areas, including the soil resource, path networks, urban woodlands and other green infrastructure aimed at enhancing the quality and accessibility of the local environment. Note that rural areas are generally open countryside which are less likely to have issues relating to surface water runoff.

5.3.13 Green and open space is vast throughout the LDP area. However, the areas of green and open space which are in direct Council control represent a small percentage, highlighting the important role of private landowners in contributing toward mitigating climate change and the sustainable management of green infrastructure.

5.3.14 Despite the above, the Council can still implement effective measures, which has been proven by recent tree planting schemes in collaboration with Gwynedd Nature Partnership. In addition, essential maintenance works have been undertaken across eight areas of Council-owned woodland to enhance carbon storage capacity and reduce flood risk and a feasibility study for the implementation of blue-green infrastructure in selected locations across nine Gwynedd towns is underway[33]. The Council is also continuing to establish wildflower meadows along road verges and beyond.[34]

Overheating

5.3.15 Overheating refers to situations where indoor temperatures exceed comfortable and healthy levels, often resulting in discomfort, health risks, and increased energy consumption. In the context of climate change, overheating is becoming an increasingly significant issue, particularly in urban areas, where the combined effects of higher temperatures, reduced green spaces, and increasing urban density can exacerbate the problem. Urban heat islands (UHI) are particularly evident in areas with high population density, where concrete, asphalt, and other materials absorb and retain heat.

5.3.16 Despite having a high proportion of rural settlements, it will be important for development within urban settlements of the LDP area to consider the effects of overheating by ensuring that suitable shading, ventilation and green infrastructure is incorporated to help cool urban environments to ensure resilience to future heat extremes.

[32] Cyngor Gwynedd (2025). 'Flood alleviation projects in Gwynedd take a step forward' can be accessed here.
[33] Cyngor Gwynedd (no date): 'Cyngor Gwynedd Blue-Green Infrastructure' can be accessed here.
[34] Cyngor Gwynedd (2025): 'Annual Report Climate and Nature Emergency Plan' can be accessed here.

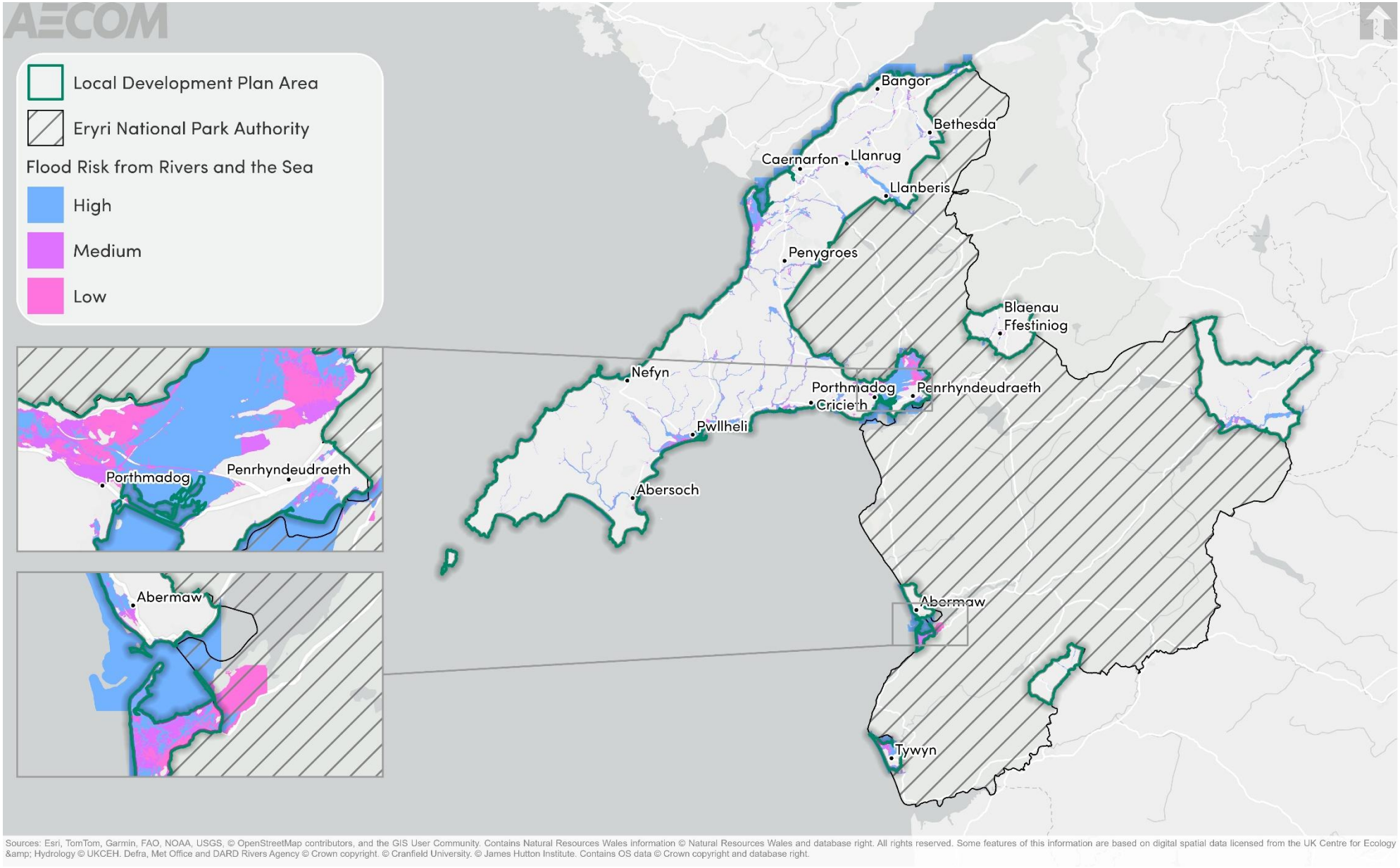


Figure 5-1: Flood risk from rivers and the sea within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area.

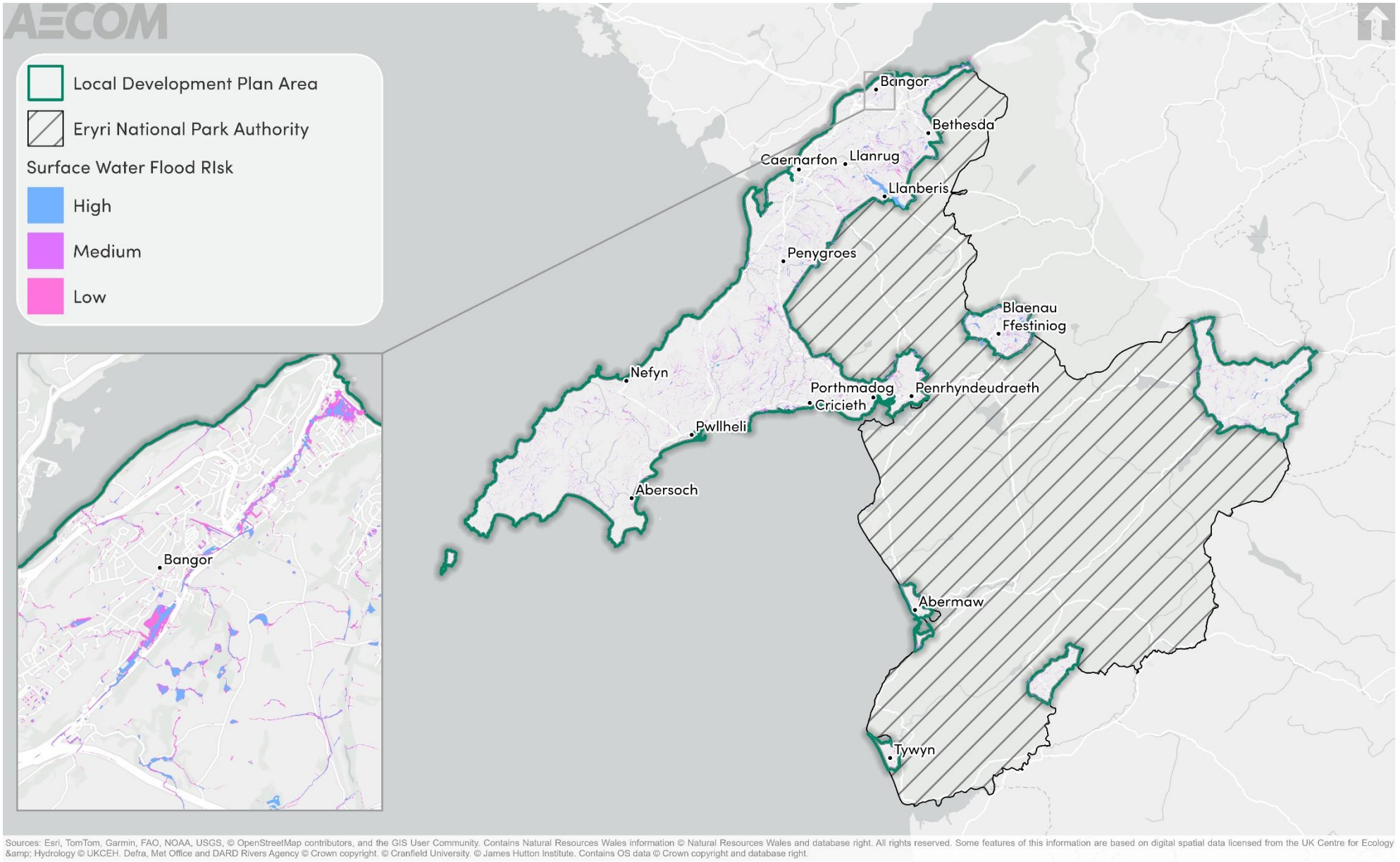


Figure 5-2: Risk of flooding from surface water within and in proximity to Gwynedd

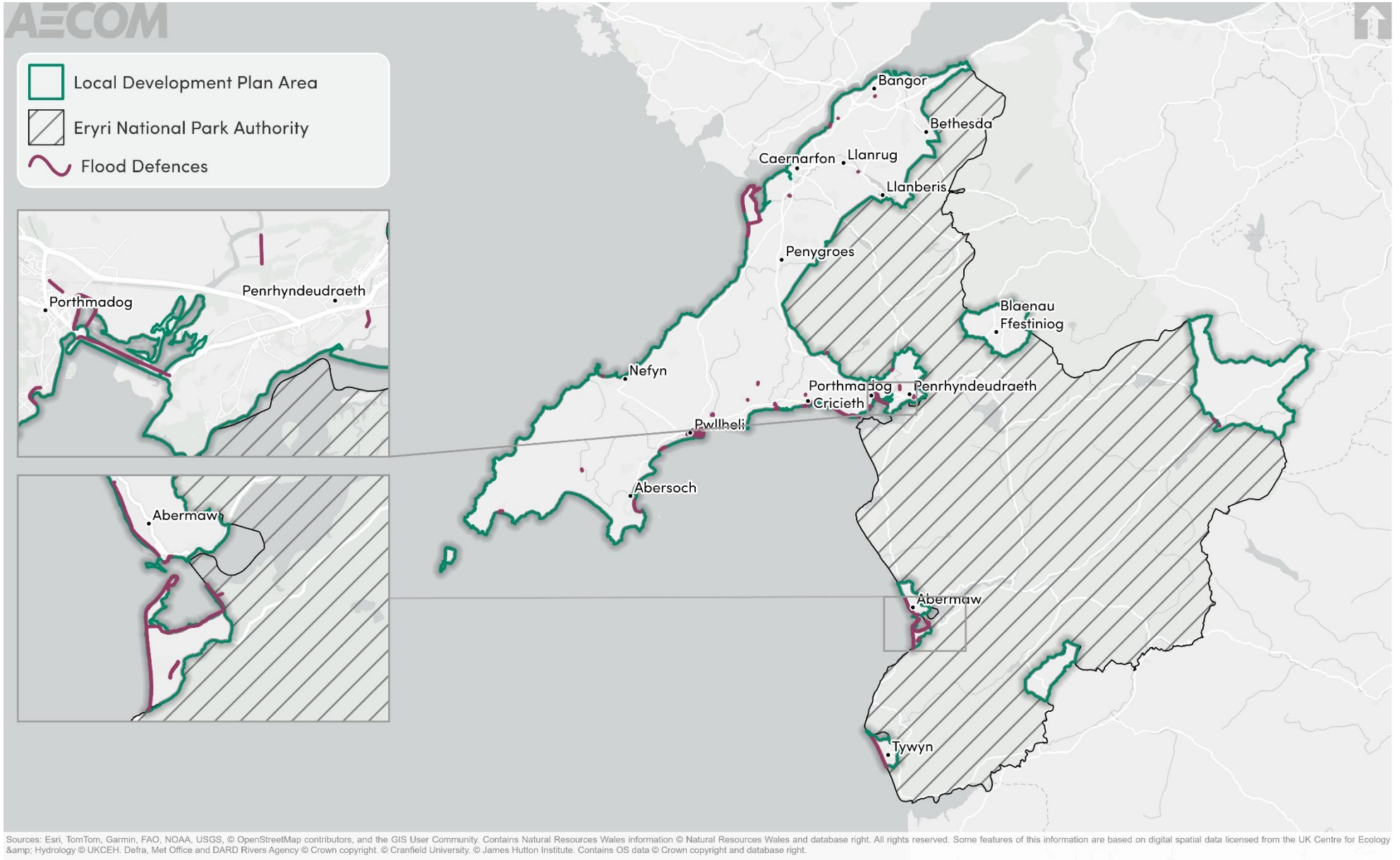


Figure 5-3: Flood Defences in Gwynedd

5.4 Future baseline

5.4.1 In line with Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 15, development should be directed away from areas at risk of flooding and coastal erosion. Furthermore, proposals are expected to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water run-off as near to its source as possible.

5.4.2 New development could potentially increase flood risk through factors such as changing surface and ground water flows, loss of mature vegetation, damaging soils, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk and potential elevated flood risks in the future.

5.4.3 Climatic and weather pattern changes towards higher mean temperatures and extreme heating events are likely to be seen in the future, this can be expected to have more pronounced effects upon rural and urban areas and in particular vulnerable populations within these areas. This is likely to necessitate the pursuit of opportunities to design cooling solutions into development, such as shading by retaining and planning of trees and increased green infrastructure and ventilation.

5.4.4 Future projections for sea level rise of the coast of Gwynedd estimate sea level rise of up to 0.58 metres by 2100 under a Shared Socioeconomic Pathway (SSP) 2-4.5 scenario, [35] relative to a 1995-2014 baseline.[36] Such increases are likely to increase the rate of coastal erosion and heighten the frequency and severity of flooding and storm surges, placing coastal communities at greater risk from climate change impacts. Continued investment in coastal defences and emissions reductions will therefore be essential to protect the LDP area's coastline from climate change impacts.

5.5 Key issues

5.5.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- Principal sources of flood risk within the LDP area are from coastal water, surface water, and fluvial sources, the latter primarily along river corridors which pose a risk to some settlements including Bangor, Caernarfon and Bethesda. Coastal flooding is also a risk to some existing residential areas – including parts of Porthmadog, Tywyn and Pwllheli, which are located within areas of greater flood risk.
- It is anticipated that climate change will increase the variability of weather and the frequency of extreme weather events.
- The impacts of climate change have the potential to affect the health and wellbeing of residents in the plan area. It will be important for the Gwynedd LDP to combat inequalities and health risks associated with climate change in the planning and design of new development.

[35] SSP 2-4.5 is a scenario in which there is intermediate GHG emissions with CO_2 emissions around current levels until 2050, then falling but not reaching net zero by 2100.
[36] NASA (2025): 'Sea Level Projection Tool' can be accessed here.

5.6 ISA objectives

5.6.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objectives	Assessment questions – will the policy/proposal help to:
Support the resilience of the LDP area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding from fluvial, coastal and surface water sources.	• Avoid development in areas at risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Increase resilience of the built and natural environment to the effects of climate change particularly in areas where coastal and fluvial flooding is identified? • Ensure that the potential risks associated with climate change are considered in new development in the plan area? • Help reduce overheating by protecting and expanding green infrastructure, expanding permeable surface cover and increasing tree cover (e.g. via urban greening / native planting)? • Utilise green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems to sustainably manage water run-off, reducing surface water runoff, whilst creating opportunities for habitat creation, tree planting and open spaces? • Minimise flood risk for key infrastructures, such as transport, agriculture and power? • Support climate-resilient design and infrastructure to safeguard public health, especially for vulnerable populations?

6. Climate change mitigation

6.1 Introduction to theme

6.1.1 This theme focuses on activities in the LDP area that contribute to climate change mitigation, including mitigating the LDP area's emissions, and developing renewable energy infrastructure.

6.2 Policy context

6.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 6-1**.

Table 6-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to climate change mitigation

Document title	Year of publication
Annual Report Gwynedd Council Climate and Nature Emergency Plan	2025
Local Area Energy Plan	2025
Cyngor Gwynedd's Green Fleet Plan 2023-29	2023
The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan	2023
Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022-2030	2022
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017
Carbon Management Plan 2	2015

6.3 Baseline summary

Climate emergency

6.3.1 In March 2019 Cyngor Gwynedd joined with the Welsh Government and local authorities across the UK in declaring a climate emergency, alongside recognising the importance of addressing the nature emergency. In response, Cyngor Gwynedd prepared the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022-2030. The aim of the plan is to outline the steps the council will take between 2022 and 2030 to achieve net zero carbon and support nature recovery.

Emissions

6.3.2 In mitigating climate change and its damaging consequences, it is important to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and decarbonise the economy. It is important to focus on different sources of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in order

to better understand how targeted approaches can have the most significant effects.

6.3.3 Gwynedd's emissions largely reflect the significant agricultural activity present. The graph below shows GHG emissions for Gwynedd 2005-2023, as measured by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.[37] Figure 6-1: Gwynedd GHG emissions by sector (2005-2023) shows that the agricultural sector has historically been, and remains, the largest contributing sector with regards to GHG emissions. It also shows that all sectors have experienced an overall decrease in emissions since 2005, although figures appear to have been levelling off since 2020. It is noted that some sectors, such as the transport sector, have experienced a slight increase since 2020.

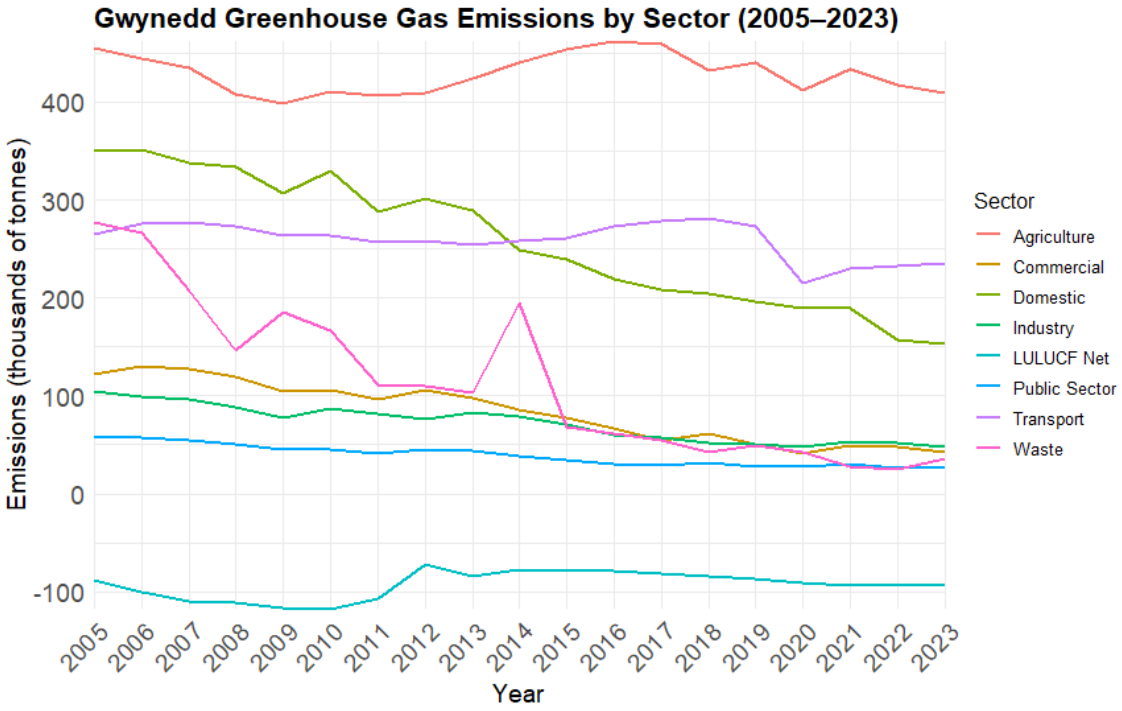


Figure 6-1: Gwynedd GHG emissions by sector (2005-2023)

6.3.4 GHG emission data since 2005 indicated that Gwynedd has a lower proportion of GHG emissions per capita in comparison to Wales as a whole, but higher emissions per capita than the UK. This is shown in **Figure 6-2** overleaf. A high emissions per capita figure suggests that each resident of Gwynedd is responsible for more emissions than average resident of the UK. This is likely linked to the thriving agricultural sector within Gwynedd.

[37] UK Government (2025) 'UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2023' can be accessed here.

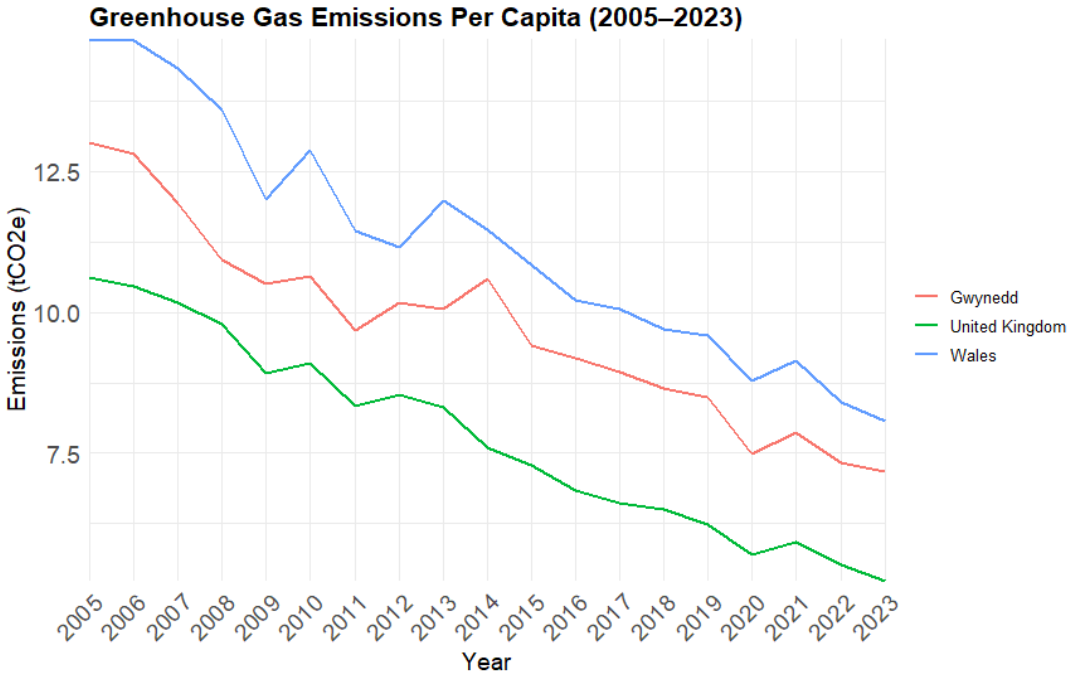


Figure 6-2: GHG emissions per capita (2005-2023)

Renewable energy

6.3.5 The Joint LDP identified a range of potential renewable energy sources that could be delivered by 2026. It was expected that by 2021 50% of the identified renewable energy potential of Gwynedd would be delivered by 2021 (568 GWh). However, by 2025, only 119.6 GWh of additional renewable energy generation had been delivered beyond the baseline.

6.3.6 In total, there is 129 MW of onshore renewable electricity generation capacity in Gwynedd, across a range of different generating technologies. It is estimated that this contributes 3.2% of Welsh renewable energy generation as of 2024.[38] **Table 6-2** below shows the distribution of renewable electricity generation across Gwynedd.

Table 6-2: Renewable Energy Generation in Gwynedd (2024)[39]

Renewable energy type	Capacity (MW electricity)
Solar photovoltaics	57.7
Hydropower	62.2
Onshore wind	6.2
Other	2.9
Total	129.0

[38] UK Government (2024) '*Regional Renewable Statistics*' can be accessed here.
[39] Ibid.

6.3.7 Gwynedd is Wales' leading authority on hydropower capacity, producing 62.2MW of power from its two hydroelectric stations. Renewable energy sources currently account for approximately 29% of electricity consumption in Gwynedd, with the remainder supplied from the national grid.[40]

6.3.8 Community energy initiatives are active across Gwynedd, include Cyd Ynni, Ynni Ogwen, Datblygiadau Egni Gwledig and Energy Local. All of these initiatives and groups are working to promote renewable energy, reduce carbon emissions and empower local communities.

Electric vehicles

6.3.9 Electric vehicles have a significant role to play in securing a greener future on the roads. The transport sector accounts for 16% of GHG emissions in Wales, and as of 2025 2.57% of vehicles registered in Wales are electric, up from 0.17% in 2021.[41] The figure for Gwynedd is slightly lower, with 1.92% of vehicles registered being electric.

6.3.10 In line with national commitments, Cyngor Gwynedd are delivering electric vehicle infrastructure and supporting the shift away from private vehicle travel throughout the authority. At this time, the council recognises that there is a gap in the private provision of vehicle charging points in Gwynedd. The work being done to provide charging points on Council owned sites is an attempt to fill this gap to ensure there is suitable provision for Gwynedd residents.

6.4 Future baseline

6.4.1 In terms of climate change mitigation, per capita emissions in Gwynedd are likely to continue to decrease in line with regional and national trends. This is due to energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies becoming more widely adopted. This is likely to contribute positively towards meeting the UK's Net Zero target.

6.4.2 Cyngor Gwynedd has made commitments to reducing carbon emissions and supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy. Continued investment in renewable energy, sustainable transport, and energy-efficient buildings will be essential to lowering emissions while promoting economic growth. Exploring new approaches to decarbonisation, including low-carbon heat networks and local energy generation will be key to achieving a net-zero future.

6.4.3 It is considered that opportunities for renewable and low energy generation will further increase over time. This is anticipated to be across a range of sources, as well as from sources enabled through the development of new technologies. As discussed above, this is currently being taken advantage of throughout Gwynedd, for example with many operational large scale energy schemes in place.

6.4.4 The uptake of electric vehicles is expected to increase at both local authority and national levels. In order to support the transition away from fossil-fuel powered vehicles, it will be necessary to ensure that sufficient electric

[40] Gwynedd Council (2025) 'Local Area Energy Plan' can be accessed here.
[41] UK Government (2025) 'Vehicle licensing statistics data tables' can be accessed here.

vehicle charging infrastructure is available to meet the needs of full time residents. A current gap in the baseline relates to the limited availability of private charging facilities. Given the increasing popularity of the LDP area as a tourist location, and the subsequent demand on charging infrastructure, it will be important to continue to increase the provision of public charging points to support local residents.

Net Zero[42]

6.4.5 Climate Emergency UK publishes climate scorecards every other year to assess council's progress towards net zero across multiple categories. In 2025, Cyngor Gwynedd achieved an overall score of 41%, representing a 9% increase since 2023 and placing it joint 4th compared to other Welsh Councils and above the average of 37%.

6.4.6 The Council performed most strongly in buildings and heating, scoring 66% (the second highest among all authorities in Wales). Improvements were also recorded in biodiversity, collaboration, and transport, although performance in planning and land use, waste reduction and governance declined. Overall, the results demonstrate that Cyngor Gwynedd is making progress in climate action while highlighting the need for further improvement in planning and land use, waste reduction and governance policy to achieve net zero within the plan area.

6.5 Key issues

6.5.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- In supporting the implementation of the Welsh Government's Low Carbon Delivery Plan, there is a need to decarbonise across all sectors of society (including the economy, energy, infrastructure, lifestyles), with further need to take measures to reduce the levels of carbon in the atmosphere.
- Planning must play a key role in ensuring that communities and infrastructure are resilient to the negative effects of climate change, by avoiding risk in the first instance and seeking to mitigate risk otherwise (e.g., by utilising green infrastructure). In this respect, it is recognised that the existing Joint LDP target of 568 GWh of renewable energy generation by 2021 has not been met. [43]
- The council performed favourably in progress towards net zero in buildings and heating, biodiversity, collaboration and transport, but performed less favourably in planning and land use, governance and waste reduction.
- Expanding EV infrastructure is needed to support the transition to a less fossil fuel dependant transport sector.
- Agriculture, domestic and transport sectors are the largest contributors to carbon emissions within Gwynedd, with agricultural emissions showing the slowest rate of decline.

[42] Climate Emergency UK (2025) '*Action Scorecards*' can be accessed here.
[43] Gwynedd Council (2017) 'Joint Local Development Plan' can be accessed here.

- Per capita carbon emissions in Gwynedd have declined since 2005 but remain higher than the averages for the United Kingdom.

6.6 ISA objectives

6.6.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objectives	Assessment questions – will the policy/proposal help to:
Reduce the LDP area's contribution to climate change from activities which result in greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to meeting the Council's target of net zero.	• Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable sources? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce the need to travel or the number of journeys made? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Ensure rural development does not contribute towards further increases in high energy use and unstainable travel?

7. Communities

7.1 Introduction to theme

7.1.1 This theme focuses on the demographics and households of the population in the LDP area.

7.2 Policy context

7.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 7-1**Table 5-1.

Table 7-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to communities

Document title	Year of publication
Gwynedd Strategic Equality Plan	2024
Gwynedd's Welsh Language Strategy 2023-33	2023
North Wales Regional Plan	2023
The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan	2023
North Wales Population Needs Assessment	2022
North Wales Market Stability Report	2022
Gwynedd Local Housing Market Assessment	2018
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017

7.3 Baseline summary

Population overview

7.3.1 The latest mid-year estimate for the Gwynedd population is for 2025, and indicates the population was approximately 120,295.[44] This results in a population density of 47 people per square kilometre (sq. km) in the 2025 mid-year estimates, in comparison to the 46.3 people per sq.km following the 2021 Census – which indicated that 117,393 people resided in Gwynedd (though it is noted that this data was collected during the pandemic, which could have impacted upon population numbers). This demonstrates a population growth of approximately 1.5%. A population density of 47 people per sq.km makes Gwynedd the third least densely populated out of all 22 local authority areas in Wales[45]. It is important to note that the figures used in this section are for Gwynedd as a whole, not just the LDP area.

[44] StatsWales (2026) 'Population estimates by local authority, year, sex and age' can be accessed here.
[45] ONS (2026): 'Estimates of the population for England and Wales' can be accessed here..

7.3.2 The population make-up of Gwynedd reflects overall trends for Wales:[46]

- In Gwynedd, in 2025 it was estimated that 60.8% of the population (73,187) were aged 16-64. This compares to 61% for Wales as a whole.
- It was estimated that 15.3% of Gwynedd's population (18,417) were aged 0-15. This compared to 17% for Wales as a whole.
- It was estimated that 23.9% (28,691) of Gwynedd's population were aged 66 and over. This compared to 22% for Wales as a whole.

7.3.3 In terms of the population's gender and age profile[47]:

- In 2025, it was estimated that there were slightly more females (61,380 equating to 51%) than males (58,915 equating to 49%) living in Gwynedd. This percentage split mirrors data for Wales as a whole.
- In absence of specific data from 2025 relating to age groups and gender, data from the mid-year 2025 estimates are used instead.[48] In 2025, the 0-15 age group had slightly more males (9,454 equating to 51.3%) compared to females (8,963 equating to 48.7%). This compares to 51.2% males and 48.8% females for Wales as a whole.
- In 2025, the gender split for the people aged 16-64 was almost 50:50 (49.2% male, 50.8% female), and was almost identical to Wales as a whole (49.3% male, 50.7% female).
- In 2025, there was a greater split for those aged 65 and over; although this reflects national trends, the difference in Gwynedd is slightly less pronounced. There were an estimated 15,224 (53.1%) females and 13,467 (46.9%) males, compared to 53.6% females and 46.4% males for Wales as a whole.

Future population changes

7.3.4 Like much of the country, Gwynedd is experiencing an ageing population. Population projections estimate that by 2042 the percentage of the population aged 0-64 will remain relatively stable, whereas the percentage of the population aged 65 and over will increase more rapidly – in 2018 people aged 65 and over made up 22.7% of the population in Gwynedd, and this is expected to rise to 25.7% by 2043.[49] In 2024 Gwynedd applied for membership of the Age-Friendly Cities and Communities network. Membership will help Gwynedd to learn from other age-friendly communities and build upon opportunities that enable individuals to live longer and healthier lives.[50]

7.3.5 The Inequality in a Future Wales Report (2021) examines future challenges and opportunities for creating a more equal Wales. It focuses on the future of work, climate change and demographic change, highlighting that an ageing

[46] StatsWales (2026) 'Population estimates by local authority, year, sex and age' can be accessed here.
[47] Ibid.
[48] ONS (2026): 'Estimates of the population for England and Wales' can be accessed here..
[49] Welsh Government '*Population projections by local authority and year*' (2018) can be accessed here.
[50] Cyngor Gwynedd '*Oed Gyfeillgar Baseline assessment*' (2024) can be accessed here.

population risks widening inequalities in education, employment, health and social care.[51]

7.3.6 Error! Reference source not found.**Table 7-2** below shows North Wales population projections by local authority and year from 2022-2047, based on estimated population from 2022.[52] Gwynedd had the third highest usual resident population in 2022, behind Flintshire and Wrexham. An increase in population of 14,245 is expected by 2047 compared to 2022. It is noted that the estimated figure in 2022 differs from the 2021 Census data regarding actual population (however, the Census data may be impacted by changes in the population caused by the pandemic).

7.3.7 Gwynedd is predicted to have the fastest growing population in North Wales (**Table 7-2**). This indicates that the population is growing at a comparatively high rate. Despite this, deaths (1,435) exceeded births (925) in 2025[53], indicating that projected population growth in Gwynedd could be driven by inward migration rather than natural change.

Table 7-2: Population projections[54]

Area	2022 - 2034	2034- 2047	Total
Isle of Anglesey	+2.1%	+2.6%	+4.8%
Gwynedd	+7.7%	+4.1%	+12.1%
Conwy	+3.1%	+3.6%	+6.8%
Denbighshire	+6.2%	+5.0%	+11.6%
Flintshire	+3.1%	+3.3%	+6.6%
Wrexham	+1.4%	+1.1%	+2.5%

Population migration patterns

7.3.8 Migration may have played a small part in Gwynedd's population change between 2011 and 2021. Net migration refers to the estimated inward and outward population occurring between local authorities in the United Kingdom.

7.3.9 In Gwynedd there was negative net migration between 2011 and 2021.[55] In this time frame a net 1,325 people moved out of Gwynedd. At the same time the population decreased by 4,451 people, and so 30% of the net decrease in population over this time can be attributed to net migration out of Gwynedd. Migration data has not been available since 2021, making it difficult to assess the more recent impacts of migration on Gwynedd's population. However, population estimates indicate that Gwynedd's population has increased in recent years (see paragraph 7.3.1), suggesting that inward migration may be outweighing outward migration in Gwynedd.

[51] Future Generations Commissioner '*Inequality in a Future Wales: Areas for action in work, climate and demographic change*' (2021) can be accessed here.
[52] StatsWales (2025) '*2022-based population projections*' can be accessed here.
[53] Nomis (2025) 'Official Census and Labour market statistics'. Can be accessed here.
[54] StatsWales (2025) '*2022-based population projections*' can be accessed here.
[55] Welsh Government '*Migration between Wales and the rest of the UK by local authority*' (2022) can be accessed here.

Welsh language

7.3.10 The Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric of Wales and the Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that the Welsh language is supported and encouraged throughout Wales. The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 sets a statutory duty on the Welsh Government to achieve over one million speakers and to double the percentage of people who use Welsh on a daily basis by 2050. The current strategy published in 2016 is currently under review.

7.3.11 The density of speakers is commonly used as a proxy indicator for the community use of the Welsh language. In 2021, the Census revealed that there were 73,560 people (aged 3+) who were able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd, which corresponds to 64.4% of the population. This is the highest of all Local Authorities in Wales. In 2011, the percentage was 65.4% (77,000) of the population. Gwynedd has seen a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers at each Census since 1981, where 76.2% of the population aged 3+ could speak Welsh. In Wales as a whole, 17.8% could speak Welsh, which was a reduction of 1.2% since 2011[56]. Welsh speaking ability varies by age group. 55% of usual residents 65 and over could speak Welsh whilst the density amongst younger age groups generally increases rising to 86% of children aged 3 – 15.

7.3.12 Error! Reference source not found. shows the percentage of people aged three years and over able to speak Welsh across Gwynedd in 2021. Overall, the figure demonstrates that the ability to speak Welsh is widespread throughout Gwynedd.

7.3.13 **Tables 7.3 – 7.5** show the distribution of each LSOA within the plan area by category of density of Welsh speakers.

Table 7.3: Gwynedd Plan Area – LSOAs that cross the 70% threshold

LSOA name	%	LSOA name	%
Seiont 1	86%	Pwllheli North	76%
Llanrug	86%	Seiont 2	76%
Bethel & Cwm y Glo1	86%	Aberdaron, Botwnnog & Tudweiliog	76%
Peblig (Caernarfon)	85%	Pwllheli South	75%
Penygroes	83%	Llanystumdwy	75%
Bontnewydd	83%	Ogwen 2	74%
Llanwnda	81%	Waunfawr	73%
Ogwen 1	81%	Gerlan	73%
Cadnant	81%	Nefyn	73%
Menai (Caernarfon)	78%	Morfa Nefyn	71%
Abererch	78%	Clynnog & Llanllyfni	71%
Groeslon	77%	Llanaelhaearn	70%
Porthmadog East	77%	Talysarn	70%

[56] Cyngor Gwynedd (no date) '*Census 2021 – Welsh Language*' can be accessed here.

Table 7.4: Gwynedd Plan Area – LSOAs with densities between 40% and 70%

LSOA name	%	LSOA name	%
Llanberis	69%	Pentir 2	57%
Bethel & Cwm y Glo 2	69%	Porthmadog West	56%
Y Felinheli	68%	Llanbedrog & Abersoch	55%
Penisarwaun	68%	Glyder	53%
Tregarth & Mynydd Llandygai	68%	Dewi	52%
Porthmadog - Tremadog	66%	Marchog 1	51%
Pentir 1	62%	Marchog 2	48%
Llanengan	61%	Tywyn 2	40%
Criccieth	60%		

Table 7.5: Gwynedd Plan Area – LSOAs that do not cross the 40% threshold

LSOA name	%	LSOA name	%
Hendre	38%	Hirael & Garth 1	33%
Tywyn 1	36%	Menai (Bangor)	22%
Hirael & Garth 2	35%	Deiniol	20%

7.3.14 The Commission for Welsh -speaking communities[57] highlighted the importance of density of the residents' ability to speak Welsh language, for community language use and planning. A majority of LSOA's within the county (36 out of 71) have over 70% who are able to speak Welsh (the threshold widely considered to be key in defining a Welsh-speaking community). The highest proportions, ranging from 80% to 86.3%, of residents able to speak Welsh are primarily found within or near more urban areas such as Caernarfon, Porthmadog, Pwllheli, and Bethesda. At the other end of the scale only 6 LSOA's had less than 40% able to speak Welsh. The lowest proportions of Welsh speakers are found in Tywyn and Bangor, the atter arising out of the influence of large employers such as the University and Ysbyty Gwynedd.

7.3.15 A separate Welsh Language Impact Assessment is being undertaken in support of the LDP and this evidence will feed into the ISA

Settlement hierarchy

7.3.16 Comprising of a mix of rural and urban environments, the LDP area has a number of distinct towns and villages spread throughout the plan area. The two largest settlements in the plan area are Bangor and Caernarfon, located in the north-east of Gwynedd.

7.3.17 The 2021 Census indicates that 16,993 people (or 14.47% of Gwynedd's population) were living in Bangor, with 10,043 (or 8.56% of the population)

[57] The Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities (2024) '*Empowering communities,strengthening the Welsh language'* can be accessed here

living in Caernarfon. As of the 2021 Census, excluding Bangor and Caernarfon, all other 32 'built-up areas' (as defined by the Office for National Statistics) in Gwynedd contained 50,944 people, or 43.4% of the total population. Therefore, 77,939 people, or 66.42% of the population of Gwynedd can be said to live in built-up areas, while the remaining 33.58% of the population reside in more rural areas. It is noted that whilst the 2021 Census was likely impacted by the pandemic, it still remains the best data source to look at population at a sub-local authority level.

7.3.18 Identified in the adopted Joint LDP as 'Sub-Regional Centre', Bangor benefits from strong rail, bus and road connectivity extending into the wider North Wales region, connecting key hubs identified in Future Wales. It serves a cross-boundary role, serving a wide catchment beyond the plan area. Bangor also supports a range of small, medium and large-scale employment opportunities on established and new sites and provides higher and further educational facilities alongside health, leisure and other essential services. The area also has good public transport links to lower-order settlements within the plan area that further strengthen its ability to function as a higher-order settlement within the adopted Joint LDP.

7.3.19 The adopted Joint LDP also recognised the role of Urban Service Centres. These are: Blaenau Ffestiniog (3,420 estimated residents in 2024), Caernarfon (10,043 estimated residents in 2024), Porthmadog (2,651 estimated residents in 2024) and Pwllheli (3,614 estimated residents in 2024).[58] These urban centres were selected to have a sub-county role with regard to providing services and facilities for their own populations and surrounding rural communities. In the adopted Joint LDP they are also expected to accommodate higher levels of housing growth. Although the four towns selected to become Urban Service Centres are very different in character and geography, they all play similar roles. For example, they all have significant resident populations (with regard to their immediate area), public transport provision, local employment opportunities, established town centres and educational facilities and services.

7.3.20 As set out in the Joint LDP, 'Local Service Centres' are the third tier of settlements. The 'Local Service Centres' in Gwynedd include: Abermaw, Bethesda, Criccieth, Llanberis, Llanrug, Nefyn, Penrhyndeudraeth, Penygroes, and Tywyn. The strategy recognises the complementary role of these settlements, providing a level of housing growth, in addition to some key local services and facilities. The 'Local Service Centres' complement the role of Urban Service Centres in that they provide for the needs of residents and cater for the needs of the surrounding rural areas. Their provision of services and facilities reduces the need for residents to travel to Bangor or Urban Service Centres for day-to-day needs. These facilities include primary schools, small shops, food and drink outlets and public transport links to higher-order centres.

7.3.21 The adopted Joint LDP also identifies 'Local Villages' including: Abererch, Brynrefail, Caeathro, Carmel, Cwm y Glo, Dinas (Llanwnda), Dinas Dinlle, Dolydd a Maen Coch, Efailnewydd, Garndolbenmaen, Garreg-Llanfrothen, Groeslon, Llandwrog, Llandygai, Llangybi, Llanllyfni, Llanystumdwy, Nantlle, Penisarwaun, Pentref Uchaf, Rhiwlas, Rhosgadfan, Rhostryfan, Sarn

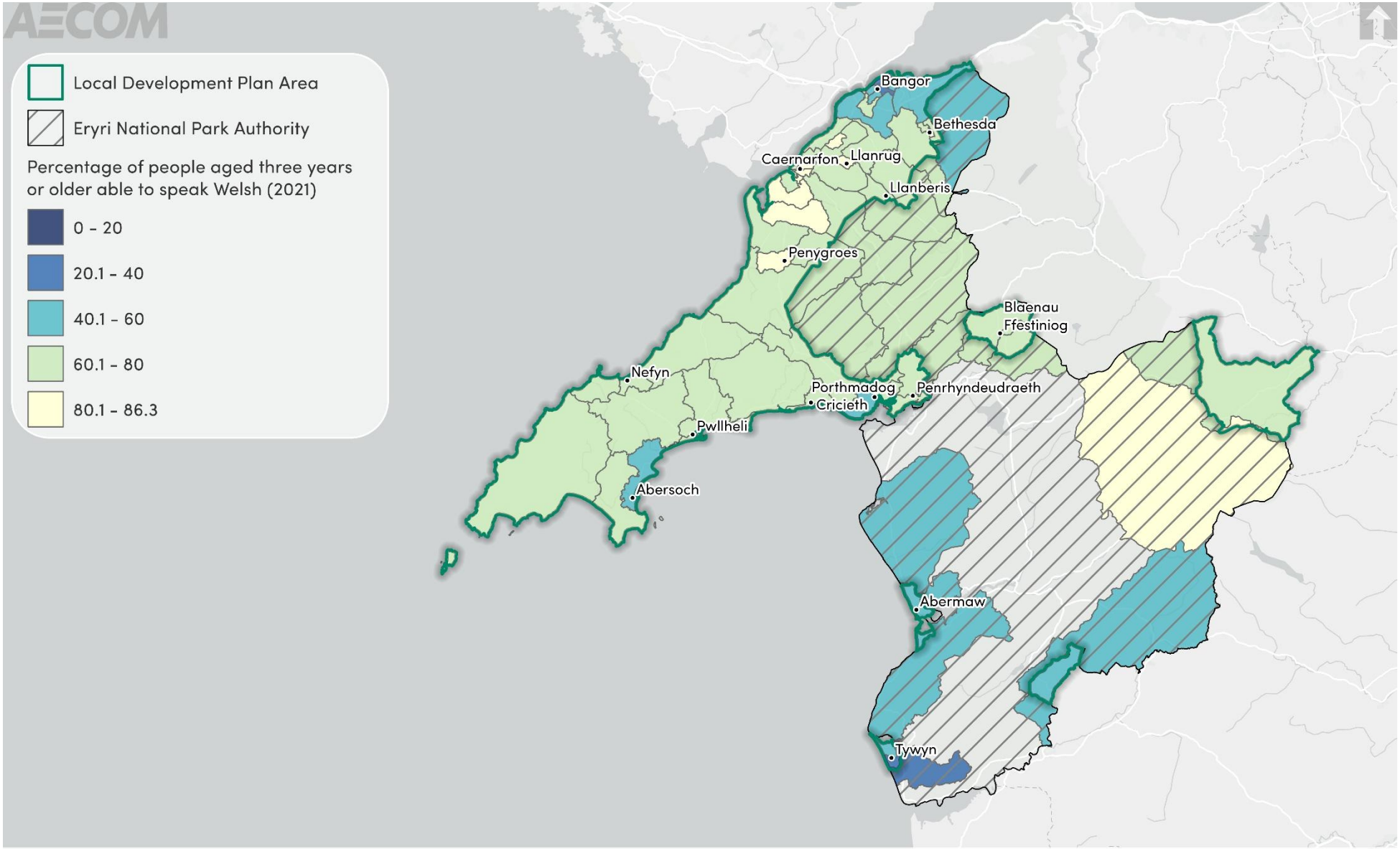
[58] ONS (2026) 'Build a custom area profile' can be accessed here.

Mellteyrn, Talysarn, Tregarth, Trefor, Waunfawr and Y Fron. Alongside 'Local Villages' are 'Coastal' and 'Rural Villages'. These include: Clynnog Fawr, Corris, Edern, Fairbourne, Llanaelhaearn, Llithfaen, Morfa Nefyn and Y Felinheli. For these settlements, the adopted Joint LDP has provided for small scale growth to complement local housing need and to support existing local services.

7.3.22 In 2021, Cyngor Gwynedd Regeneration Board agreed to develop a new regeneration framework. The intention of the Framework is to ensure that proactive steps are in place to ensure collaboration to improve the area' economy, environment and culture. As part of the framework the county was divided into 13 Local Regeneration areas with a corresponding action plan for each area.[59]

[59] Gwynedd Council 'Our Area: Local Regeneration Plans' can be accessed here.

Figure 7-1: Percentage of people aged three years or older able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd (2021)



7.4 Future baseline

7.4.1 Gwynedd is predicted to be the fastest growing population in North Wales (see **Table 7-2**), and it is anticipated that the predicted increase in the population will have far reaching impacts, affecting the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the county – including (but not limited to) changes to infrastructure needed to support the community. In the absence of the LDP, uncoordinated development may exacerbate deprivation in some areas, particularly where accessibility to services and facilities is already limited. However, it is also recognised that development in the absence of the LDP could decrease deprivation levels – through positive changes in housing standards and economic activity. It is also recognised that Gwynedd is likely to continue to experience an ageing population in the future, which presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities in relation to development.

7.4.2 The Welsh language is a defining element of Gwynedd's cultural and social identity, and its use remains stronger in Gwynedd than other Local Authorities in Wales. Gwynedd's contribution to achieving a future 'Wales where people live in places with a thriving Welsh language' [60] will be a key to achieving the Cymraeg 2050 ambitions. Using the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities' definition, 49 of LSOA's located mainly within the plan area (or around 20% out of the total of 241 throughout Wales) are defined as areas of higher density linguistic significance. Without proper consideration of what are sustainable growth and spatial choices for development of the plan area, or, in the absence of the LDP, inappropriate or uncoordinated development may result in a long-term decline in the proportion of communities who speak Welsh daily. Without the adoption of a fit for purpose LDP, downward trends experienced over recent decades may continue in the absence of planning policy measures to support Welsh language in the plan area.

7.5 Key issues

7.5.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- Overall, there has been a growth in population in Gwynedd since 2001, with the 65+ age group increasing faster than other age groups and expected to rise further by 2042. In 2018, people aged 65 and over made up 22.7% of the population in Gwynedd, and this is expected to rise to 25.7% by 2043. This suggests that Gwynedd has an ageing population and there needs to be consideration for specific housing, health and care provision needs while simultaneously recognising the positive contribution of older people to the community.
- In addition to the ageing population, Gwynedd's population is also expected grow overall. A rising population can have impacts on the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of a place by affecting the availability of housing, community services and green

[60] Welsh Government (2021) Future Wales 2040 can be access here.

space. Ensuring that there is suitable provision of services for residents will be important to maintain and enhance residents' quality of life.

- In order to protect, promote and facilitate the sustainable community use of the Welsh language, the LDP needs to ensure that the type, scale, pace and location of development supports, or does not adversely harm, communities of linguistic sensitivity and encourages investment in appropriate economic and social infrastructure that supports the growth of the number of users and the proportion of the population who speak Welsh daily.
- The LDP area is characterised by a diverse range of urban and rural settlements divided into distinct categories according to the settlement hierarchy. Bangor has the highest share of Gwynedd's population and has been designated as the 'Sub-Regional Centre'. Bangor already functions as a primary centre for retail, employment, health and education, supported by Bangor University, a hospital, the Parc Menai business park and strategic transport connections, including the A55, a central bus station and a railway station with direct services to Cardiff and Chester. However, the Bangor Placemaking Plan (2023) identifies weaknesses in public transport and active travel infrastructure, with poor connections between the city centre and the railway station[61]. It will be important that the LDP manages growth alongside suitable infrastructure upgrades to ensure that existing and new residents experience a high-quality of life.

[61] Cyngor Gwynedd (2023) '*Bangor Placemaking Plan*' can be accessed here.

7.7 ISA objectives

7.7.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

Objectives	Assessment questions – will the option/proposal help to:
Enhance design quality to create natural beautiful places for people that maintain and enhance community and settlement identity.	• Improve connectivity between communities and facilitate social interaction? • Protect and enhance community identity and distinctiveness and support opportunities for recreation and tourism? • Prevent the coalescence of settlements and retain the openness of land between settlements, green infrastructure and habitat connectivity? • Direct growth towards the most sustainable settlements in line with the settlement hierarchy?
Protect, promote and facilitate the community use of the Welsh language.	• Protect, promote and facilitate community use of Welsh in areas of higher density Welsh language speakers? • Promote and facilitate the community use and status of the Welsh language in other less dense Welsh speaking communities? • Realise conditions for the Welsh language to thrive in other contexts, including support for investment in Welsh language infrastructure, facilities and workplaces? • Protect and promote the status of the Welsh language?

8. Economy and employment

8.1 Introduction of theme

8.1.1 This theme focusses on local businesses, employment, education, skills levels, and tourism.

8.2 Policy context

8.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 8-1**.

Table 8-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to economy and employment

Document title	Year of publication
Gwynedd 2035 An Economy That Works for All	2026
Gwynedd Local Regeneration Plans	2025
Cyngor Gwnedd Supplementary Planning Guidance - Managing the Use of Dwellings as Holiday Homes	2025
The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan	2023
Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy 2035	2023
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017
Prosperity for All: economic action plan	2017
Anglesey and Gwynedd Topic Paper 9: Tourism	2015
Anglesey and Gwynedd - Economic and Employment Land Review Study (Executive Summary)	2012

8.3 Baseline summary

Regional context

8.3.1 The North Wales Economic Region, as identified through the Prosperity for All economic action plan, comprises Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, the Isle of Anglesey, Eryri National Park, and Wrexham and is home to almost 700,000 people.

8.3.2 Within the regional context, Gwynedd sits outside of the National Growth Areas identified by Future Wales. However, Policy 21 of Future Wales supports sustainable growth in regionally important towns along the northern Coast, including, but not limited to Caernarfon and Bangor. Additionally, the North Region is identified as having a National Growth Area located in Wrexham and Deeside. Gwynedd benefits from good road connectivity to these areas and will benefit from the enhanced connectivity provided by the North Wales Metro, which is anticipated to connect Gwynedd with London, Merseyside, Cheshire, and the North of England.

8.3.3 The Plan area is intersected by Eryri National Park. Managing the National Park's outstanding historic and natural resources is essential for the north region as a whole. This is of note for the LDP and this ISA theme particularly, as protection of the national park can help to provide economic and social benefits for the region's communities, for example through increasing tourist spending within Gwynedd associated with visitors staying in the area.

Existing employment (enterprise zones)

8.3.4 Since 2012, Gwynedd Council and the Welsh Government have worked together to support the development of two strategic sites within the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone – Trawsfynydd Nuclear Site and Snowdonia Aerospace Centre. Both sites lie within Eryri National Park and therefore fall outside of the LDP area. However, the Gwynedd Economic Strategy identifies aerospace and clean energy among the emerging industries in which Gwynedd could become a destination of excellence [62].

8.3.5 The Enterprise Zone builds upon the area's natural assets and industrial and military heritage to support low carbon energy, information communications and technology, medical radioisotope or aerospace-related business. Although the LDP will not directly guide development at these sites, their continued growth could have secondary effects on communities across Gwynedd. The enterprise zones have the potential to provide employment, skills and training to residents of the LDP area. As such, whilst the sites themselves are located within the National Park, they may provide wider economic and employment opportunities for communities across Gwynedd.

Existing employment (sites)

8.3.6 The adopted Joint LDP allocated 642.9 ha of employment land between Gwynedd and Anglesey, of which 272 ha was allocated for Gwynedd LDP Area. Since 2022 less than 6.9 ha per annum of employment land has been taken up on safeguarded employment sites within the Gwynedd LDP area. The AMR considered that fewer applications for developments on the employment sites within the plan area are likely to be based on economic matters that are beyond the plan's control.[63]

8.3.7 **Table 8-2** lists the existing employment sites within the LDP area. Outside of the enterprise zones, the Cibyn Industrial Estate is the largest employment location (in terms of ha).

8.3.8 Employment sites within the plan area are split into 'Primary Sites' and 'Secondary Sites'. Primary Sites are those which are likely to be more attractive to the market and are likely to be developed in the short term. Secondary sites are often in not as attractive locations as regards to access and market presence in comparison to the Primary Sites. It should also be noted that in the absence of more recent data, this information is from the adopted Joint LDP, and so some of these sites may be outdated or some sites may be missing.

[62] Cyngor Gwynedd (2026) '*An Economy that Works for All: GWYNEDD 2035'* can be accessed here.
[63] Cyngor Gwynedd (2024) 'Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 6th Annual Monitoring Report Gwynedd 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024' can be accessed here.

Table 8-2: Gwynedd employment sites

Employment site	Size (ha)
Primary Employment Sites	
Parc Bryn Cegin, Bangor	36
Llandygai Industrial Estate, Bangor	27.6
Parc Britannia, Bangor	7.9
Parc Menai, Bangor	32.9
Cibyn Industrial Estate, Caernarfon	37.7
Business Park, Penrhyndeudraeth	11.5
Business Park, Porthmadog	13.5
Pendre Industrial Estate, Tywyn	7.9
Secondary Sites	
Hirael Bay, Bangor	9.1
Peblig, Caernarfon	6.7
Former Site of Friction Dynamex, Caernarfon	7.4
Tanygrisiau Site, Blaenau Ffestiniog	7.4
Felin Fawr, Bethesda	1.5
Glyn Rhonwy, Llanberis	29.8
Penygroes Industrial Estate	10
Nefyn Industrial Estate	3.5
Former Site of Ysbyty Bron y Garth, Penrhyndeudraeth	1.6
Griffin Industrial Estate, Penrhyndeudraeth	4
Y Ffôr Industrial Estate	2.8
Agri Food Park, Llanystumdwy	6.6
Wynnstay Farmers site, Rhosfawr	4.9
Allocated Sites	
Adjacent to the petrol station, Y Ffor	1.7

Employment rates

8.3.9 Estimates published by the Office for National Statistics indicated that the employment rate in Gwynedd between April 2025 and March 2026 was 77.3%. This was comparatively higher than Wales (72.1%) and the United Kingdom as a whole (75.4%)[64].

8.3.10 **Figure 8-1** shows trends in employment rates in Gwynedd compared with the UK and Wales between 2011 and 2026. While the UK rate has increased throughout the observed period, Wales and Gwynedd have experienced greater year on year changes. Despite this, the UK employment rate has fallen within the 95% confidence interval for Gwynedd every year since 2016/17, meaning there is no clear evidence that employment in Gwynedd has differed from the UK average over this period.



Figure 8-1: Employment Rate in Wales and the UK (percentage of population aged 16-64)

8.3.11 Estimates published by the Office for National Statistics indicated that the unemployment rate in Gwynedd between April 2025 and March 2026 was 3.9%. This was comparatively lower than Wales (4.4%) and the United Kingdom as a whole (4.5%)[65].

8.3.12 **Figure 8-2** overleaf shows trends in unemployment rates in Gwynedd compared with the UK and Wales between 2011 and 2026. All three geographies have seen a reduction in unemployment rates since 2011.

[64] Office for National Statistics (no date) '*labour market statistics*' can be accessed here.
[65] Ibid

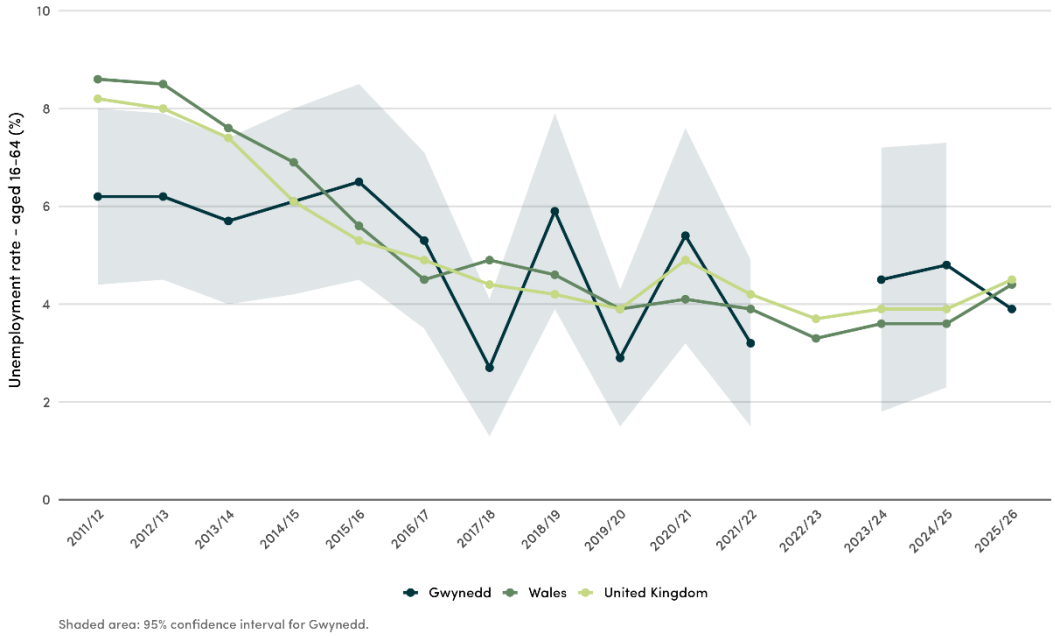


Figure 8-2: Unemployment rate (percentage of population aged 16-64)

Education

8.3.13 Data from the ONS annual population survey show that, between January 2025 and December 2025, 42.7% of Gwynedd residents aged 16 to 64 held a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) level 4 and above. This is lower than the Welsh average (44.8%). In contrast, there is a lower proportion of residents with no qualifications (5.3%) compared to Wales as a whole (7.7%).[66]

8.3.14 Lower levels of qualifications in Gwynedd may have implications for local economic growth and employment opportunities. A workforce with fewer higher-level qualifications may limit the authorities ability to attract certain high-value industries and knowledge based businesses. Conversely, sectors that require lower formal qualifications, such as skilled trades and administrative roles, may remain dominant within the local economy.

8.3.15 Outcomes for young people transitioning from education into employment or training are relatively positive. In 2020 just 1.2% of Year 11 leavers were not in education, employment or training, which is lower than the average Wales figure, which is 1.7%[67].

Local economy and business

8.3.16 The Gwynedd Economic Strategy notes that, despite low unemployment and high business survival rates, a gap remains between Gwynedd's economy and the rest of Wales and the UK[68]. Average weekly earnings are £50 lower than the Wales average, and gross value added per head is almost £12,000 lower than the UK average.

8.3.17 According to the Office for National Statistics Labour Market Profile for Gwynedd, there are 6,640 business in Gwynedd as of 2025[69].

[66] Ibid.
[67] Cyngor Gwynedd (2022) '*Gwynedd Well-Being Assessment*' can be accessed here.
[68] Cyngor Gwynedd (2026) '*An Economy that Works for All: GWYNEDD 2035*' can be accessed here.
[69] Office for National Statistics '*Labour Market Profile – Gwynedd*' can be accessed here.

8.3.18 In 2024, there were 54,000 employee jobs in Gwynedd[70]. **Table 8-3** highlights the distribution of these jobs by industry. The highest proportion of workers in Gwynedd are in the health and social work sectors, over 20% of employees work in this sector. By comparison, the industry with the smallest number of employees in Gwynedd is Mining and quarrying.

Table 8-3: Employee jobs by industry in Gwynedd

Industry	Gwynedd (Employee jobs)	Gwynedd (%)	Wales (%)	Great Britain (%)
Mining and quarrying	200	0.4	0.1	0.2
Manufacturing	3,000	5.6	10.4	7.3
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	300	0.6	0.5	0.4
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	900	1.7	1.1	0.7
Construction	3,000	5.6	4.8	5.0
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	7,000	13.0	13.5	13.7
Transportation and storage	1,000	1.9	3.2	5.0
Accommodation and food service activities	7,000	13.0	8.2	7.8
Information and communication	1,000	1.9	2.0	4.5
Financial and insurance activities	300	0.6	2.7	3.4
Real estate activities	900	1.7	1.6	1.9
Professional, scientific and technical activities	1,500	2.8	5.2	9.3

[70] Ibid.

Industry	Gwynedd (Employee jobs)	Gwynedd (%)	Wales (%)	Great Britain (%)
Administrative and support service activities	1,750	3.2	6.3	8.6
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	4,500	8.3	8.8	4.9
Education	7,000	13.0	9.3	8.6
Human health and social work activities	11,000	20.4	17.7	14.2
Arts, entertainment and recreation	2,500	4.6	2.6	2.5
Other service activities	900	1.7	1.6	1.9

Tourism

8.3.19 The tourism sector plays a substantial part in the economy of the LDP area. The visitor economy provides jobs, services and facilities that are essential to the well-being of local communities and residents of the plan area. The total economic impact of tourism in Gwynedd (including the National Park) in 2023 was £1.72 billion, with over eight million people visiting the plan area.[71]

8.3.20 Gwynedd has a range of attractions for tourists that utilise the natural environment to improve the area's economic well-being. This includes Eryri National Park, the Wales Coast Path, Llyn Heritage Coast, unique historic features, country parks, outdoor activity pursuits, and a well-established network of walking routes.

8.3.21 The economic contribution of the tourism sector grew year on year in Gwynedd between 2017 and 2019[72]. However, in 2020 data suggests the economic impact of the sector had fallen by over 57% (**Table 8-4**). This coincided with the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent closure of business and intermittent lockdowns. Since the pandemic, the tourism sector in Gwynedd has recovered strongly, with economic activity in 2023 increasing by 27.4% compared to pre pandemic levels.

[71] Gwynedd Council (2023) 'Steam Summary 2023' can be accessed here.
[72] Gwynedd Council (2017) 'Joint Local Development Plan' can be accessed here.

Table 8-4 Gwynedd tourism numbers from 2017 – 2023.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Economic Impact (billions)	£1.06	£1.12	£1.35	£0.575	£1.15	£1.52	£1.72
Number of staying visitors (millions)	3.53	3.57	3.97	1.55	2.89	4.11	4.07
Number of Day visitors (millions)	3.75	3.80	3.84	2.07	3.05	3.77	3.95
Jobs supported by tourism	15,601	15,568	18,244	9,571	14,651	17,737	17,538

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

8.3.22 The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 (WIMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation, combining eight different domains. Of particular relevance to the economy and employment SEA theme are:

- **Employment**: the proportion of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who want to work but cannot;
- **Education**: The lack of attainment in the population; and
- **Income**: the proportion of people experiencing deprivation relating to low income.

Employment

8.3.23 **Figure 8-3** shows the ranking of Gwynedd's LSOAs for the employment domain, while **Table 8-5** overleaf provides additional detail on the LSOAs within Gwynedd that fall within the 50% most deprived areas in Wales.

Table 8-5: LSOAs in Gwynedd Ranked Within 50 per cent Most Deprived or Worse for the Employment WIMD Domain

Decile	Most Deprived Indices
50% Most Deprived	10
40% Most Deprived	5
30% Most Deprived	2
20% Most Deprived	2
10% Most Deprived	1
Total	20

8.3.24 Overall, Gwynedd performs favourably with regard to the employment WIMD domain. With regard to LSOAs, 28% of Gwynedd's LSOAs are ranked within the 50% most deprived LSOAs within Wales and only one LSOA, Gogledd Marchog, is among the 10% most deprived LSOAs in Wales. Higher levels of deprivation typically exist in urban areas with lower levels found in more rural areas. The high levels of deprivation found in urban areas suggest that residents in these areas struggle with exclusion from the labour market in Gwynedd. Areas of deprivation, particularly to the east of Bangor and within Caernarfon, are present where employment opportunities are not as strong, or where people struggle to access employment opportunities[73].

Education

8.3.25 **Figure 8-4**: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – Education Decile in Gwynedd shows the ranking of Gwynedd's LSOAs for the education domain, while **Table 8-6** provides additional detail on the LSOAs within Gwynedd that fall within the 50% most deprived areas in Wales.

Table 8-6: LSOAs in Gwynedd Ranked Within 50 per cent Most Deprived or Worse for the Education WIMD Domain

Decile	Most Deprived Indices
50% Most Deprived	12
40% Most Deprived	6
30% Most Deprived	1
20% Most Deprived	2
10% Most Deprived	2
Total	23

8.3.26 Overall, just over 32% of Gwynedd's LSOAs are ranked within the 50% most deprived LSOAs within Wales and just two, De Marchog and Peblig, are within the 10% most deprived LSOAs in Wales. Higher levels of deprivation typically exist in urban areas with lower levels found in more rural areas. The high levels of deprivation found in urban areas suggest that residents in these areas struggle with a lack of educational attainment in the population.

Income

8.3.27 **Figure 8-5** shows the ranking of Gwynedd's LSOAs for the income domain, while

[73] Welsh Government (2025) '*Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025 results report'* can be accessed here.

8.3.28 **Table** 8-7 provides additional detail on the LSOAs within Gwynedd that fall within the 50% most deprived areas in Wales.

Table 8-7: LSOAs in Gwynedd Ranked Within 50 per cent Most Deprived or Worse for the Income WIMD Domain

Decile	Most Deprived Indices
50% Most Deprived	10
40% Most Deprived	8
30% Most Deprived	6
20% Most Deprived	0
10% Most Deprived	3
Total	27

8.3.29 With regard to LSOAs, just over 38% of Gwynedd's LSOAs are ranked within the 50% most deprived LSOAs within Wales for income deprivation. Furthermore, only three, De Marchog, Gogledd Marchog and Peblig, are within the 10% most deprived across Wales. Higher levels of deprivation typically exist in urban areas with lower levels found in more rural areas. The high levels of deprivation found in urban areas suggest that residents in these areas struggle with deprivation relating to low income.

8.3.30 Analysis of the data across the three domains indicated that the representation of the most deprived 10% of LSOAs is concentrated within just three LSOAs in the plan area: De Marchog, Gogledd Marchog and Peblig. This suggest that whilst deprivation is present across the wider area, the most acute forms of deprivation are limited to a small number of locations. These overlaps indicate neighbourhoods where residents may face interconnected barriers across income, employment, and education. Such areas are likely to benefit from strategic interventions that address several forms of deprivation at once.

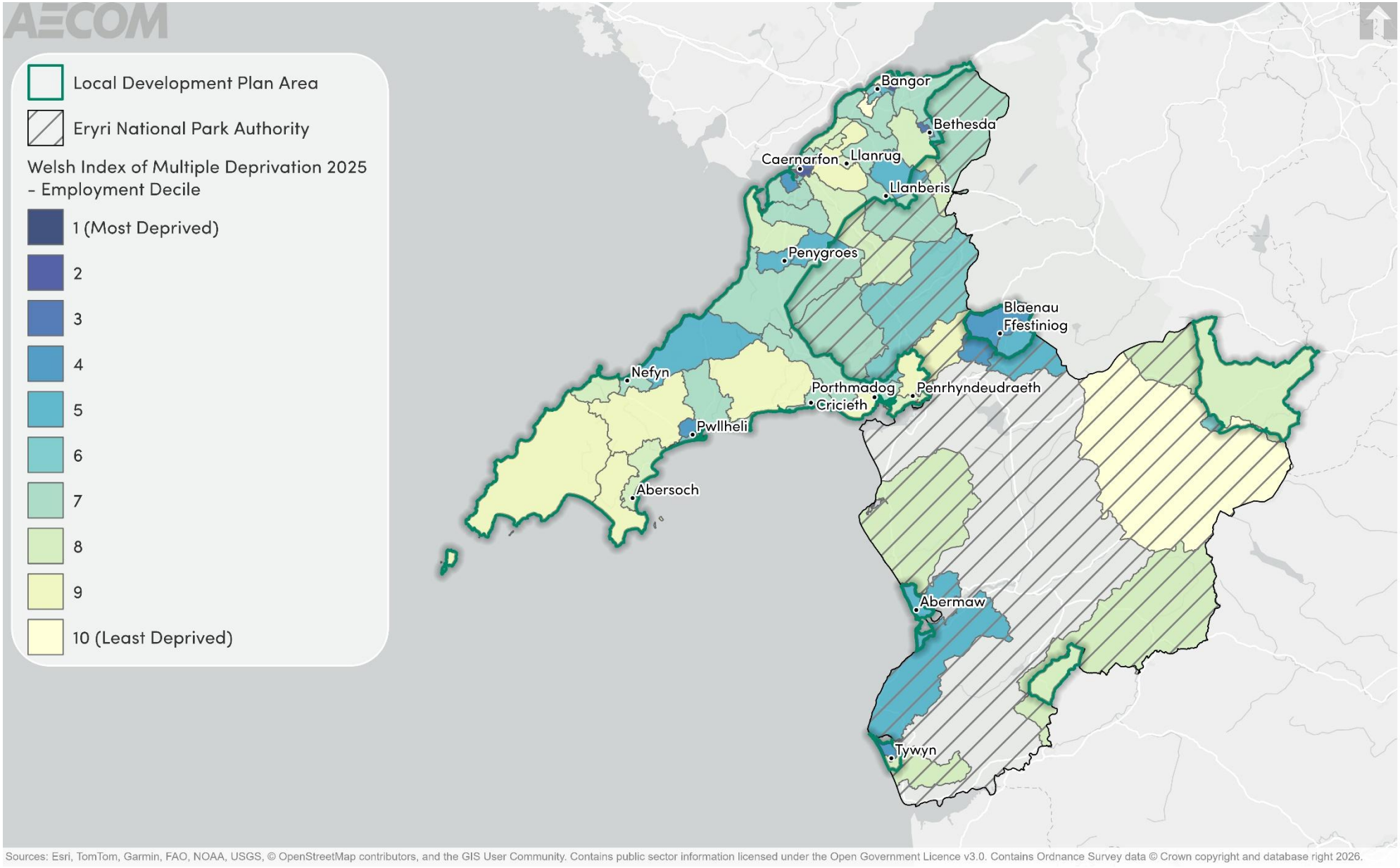


Figure 8-3: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – Employment Decile in Gwynedd

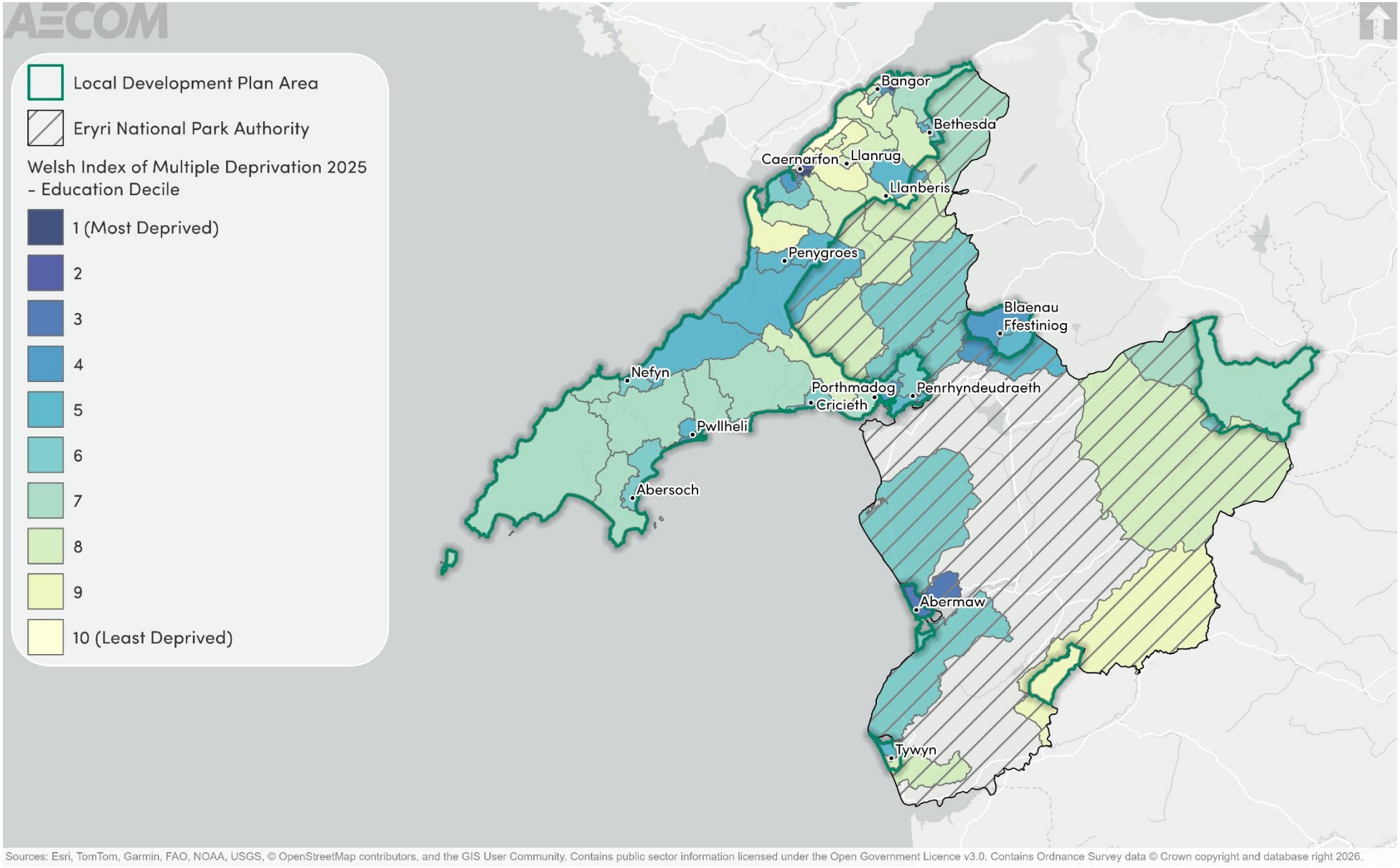


Figure 8-4: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – Education Decile in Gwynedd

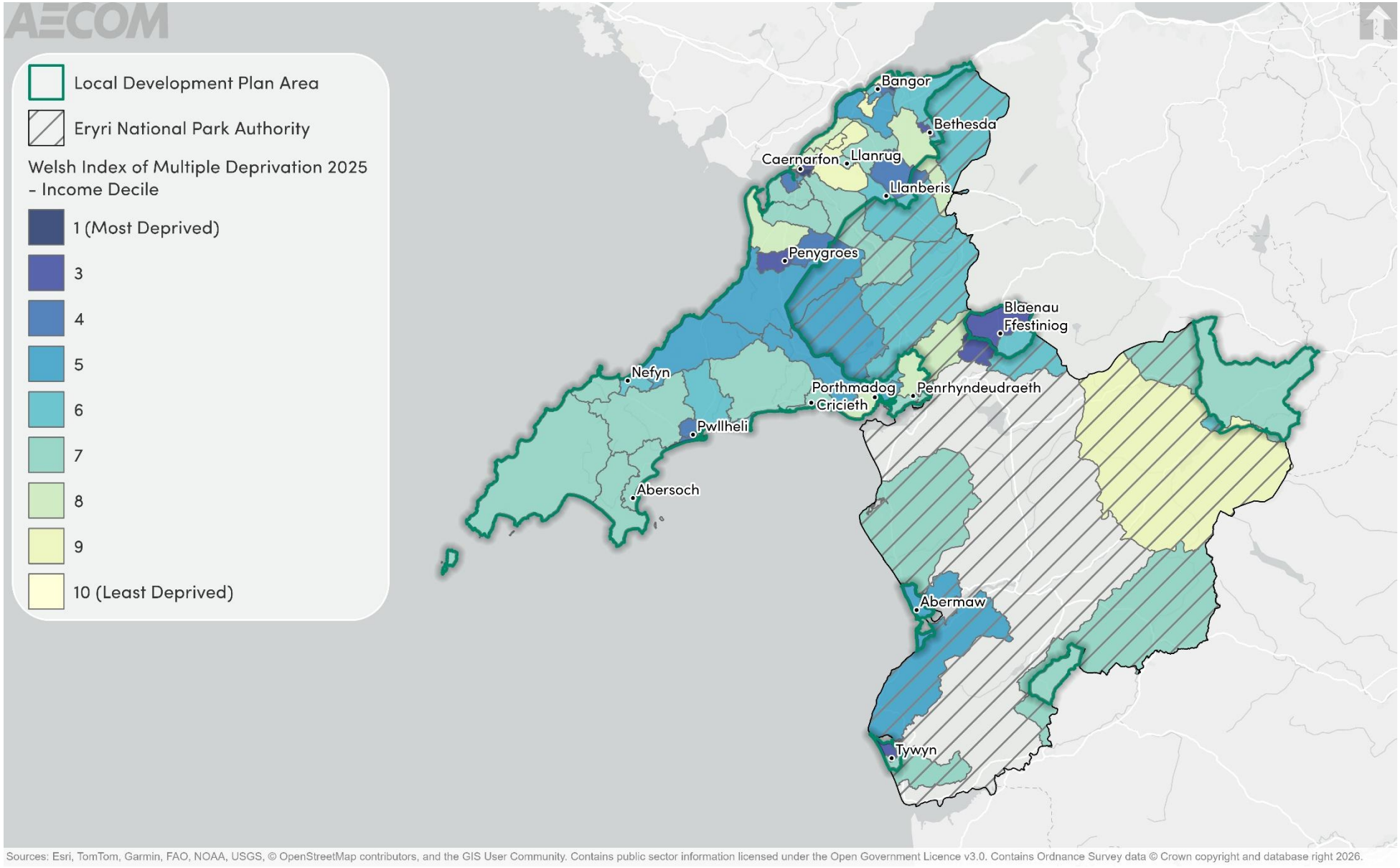


Figure 8-5: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – Income Decile in Gwynedd

8.4 Future baseline

8.4.1 Certain sectors are more susceptible to the effects of unemployment within Wales, including the mining and quarrying and engineering sectors. Overall predictions for 2035 indicate that the number of people employed in these sectors in Wales will fall by 34.4% and 17.3% respectively. In comparison, the number of people employed in health and social work and water and sewerage are expected to increase by 17.4% and 16.1% respectively.[74]

8.4.2 The Welsh government's commitment to encouraging home and distance working to continue post pandemic provides opportunities for employment within rural and semi-rural locations and potential increased demand for flexible workspaces within urban settlements. When considering this alongside the low take up of employment land since 2022, the future baseline of the LDP area may consist of a more hybrid workforce.

8.4.3 Strategically, the Trawsfynydd Nuclear Site and Snowdonia Aerospace Centre located in the nearby Eryri National Park will assist in the delivery of significant aviation and energy related economic growth not only within the LDP area but also in the wider North Wales Region.

8.4.4 The Regional Growth Area and North Wales Metro development specifically has the potential to bring localised changes to the local and regional economy that could be realised over a short timeframe. The LDP area must look to leverage these assets to ensure continued job creation and positive economic growth.

8.4.5 Tourism plays a significant role in the economy across the LDP area and North Wales as a whole. There are opportunities to support the continued regeneration of coastal resorts and visitor attractions, alongside the development of new outdoor and active leisure facilities to ensure the continued expansion of the sector within the LDP area.

8.5 Key issues

8.5.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- The LDP area's location with the North Wales Economic Region gives it access to economic investment, including the delivery of the North Wales Metro which will improve connectivity throughout the region. Future growth shall need to consider how the needs of the community are aligned with sustainable development and climate change objectives.
- The employment rate in Gwynedd has been consistent with the Welsh Employment rate. Furthermore, residents who hold a Level 4 qualification or above is lower than the Welsh average and high levels of unemployment exist in the county, in addition to low levels of income and educational deprivation, notably in certain areas within urban centres.

[74] Welsh Government (2025) 'The Skills Imperative 2035: Labour market and skills projections for the UK' can be accessed here.

- Trawsfynydd Nuclear Site and Snowdonia Aerospace Centre has the potential to support high quality jobs and training for Gwynedd residents.
- The emerging LDP will need to consider how policy can accommodate trends and the changing nature of employment and the role of work from home to ensure the uptake of safeguarded employment sites.
- The LDP area has a range of tourist attractions that utilise the natural and historic environment to improve the area's economic well-being. It will be important for the emerging LDP to utilise its assets in a sustainable way to ensure future social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being throughout communities is enhanced and the integrity of the natural and historic assets are maintained and enhanced where possible.
- Analysis of the education, employment and income WIMD domains identifies three LSOAs (De Marchog, Gogledd Marchog and Peblig) among the 10% most deprived areas across all three domains. This suggests that, while deprivation exists more widely across the area, the most acute and interconnected deprivation is concentrated within a small number of neighbourhoods.

8.6 ISA objectives

8.6.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objectives	Assessment questions – will the option/proposal help to:
Support a sustainable, diverse, and resilient economy, with innovative responses to changing conditions and support for a strong future workforce.	• Improve skills and qualifications among residents to support access to high-skilled jobs? • Safeguard and enhance established industries across the district, supporting the resilience of Gwynedd's economy? • Create diverse, well-paid, and locally accessible employment opportunities across the district? • Support growth sectors and address existing and future skills gaps through training and education initiatives? • Enable flexible working through investment in digital infrastructure and adaptable workspaces? • Protect and enhance employment land? • Enhance the vitality and resilience of town centre and retail centres, supporting diversification in line with changing needs? • Maintain and enhance existing tourism destinations? • Encourage sustainable development and quality facilities to enrich the experience for visitors and residents? • Ensure the economy grows in a sustainable manner? • Promote a prosperous Wales?

9. Equality, diversity and inclusion

9.1 Introduction to theme

9.1.1 This theme focuses on the deprivation, crime inequalities, groups with protected characteristics, and associated equality issues.

9.2 Policy context

9.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in Appendix B. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 9-1.**

Table 9-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusion

Document title	Year of publication
Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028	2024
The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan	2023
North Wales Regional Plan	2023
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017

9.3 Baseline summary

Communities

9.3.1 Gwynedd is regarded as an attractive and safe area to live and work, however, pockets of poverty and deprivation do exist. These are reflected through the WIMD 2025. The WIMD is a national statistic designed to identify the small areas of Wales that are most deprived.[75]

9.3.2 There are 71 LSOAs in Gwynedd, as shown in **Figure 9-1 below**, which maps the latest WIMD headline data (2025). Around half of Gwynedd's LSOAs fall within the 50% most deprived LSOAs in all of Wales. Of note here is that just 3 LSOAs in Gwynedd (De Marchog, Gogledd Marchog and Peblig) are considered to be among the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in Wales, which suggest that extreme deprivation is localised and not widespread throughout the plan area.

Crime and Community Safety

9.3.3 The rate of reported crimes in Gwynedd has declined over the last few years, as shown in **Table 9-2**.

[75] Welsh Government: '*Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025 technical report*' (2025) can be accessed here.

Table 9-2: Gwynedd – Average crimes committed per month 2015 – 2025[76]

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reported Crimes	811	778	841	865	970	927	938	989	891	863	850

9.3.4 According to data from November 2022, in Gwynedd the largest number of crimes were violent (323), followed by Anti-social behaviour (158), shoplifting (62) and criminal damage and arson (62).

9.3.5 According to the National Survey for Wales in 2020/21, 80% of Gwynedd residents feel safe in their local area after dark[77]. This is the joint highest percentage of all Welsh counties.

Community Safety

9.3.6 The community safety indicator of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 (WIMD) considers deprivation relating to living in a safe community. It covers actual experience of crime, as well as perceptions of safety whilst out and about in the local area.

9.3.7 **Figure 9-2** shows the ranking of Gwynedd's LSOAs for the community safety domain, while **Table 9-3** provides additional detail on the LSOAs within Gwynedd that fall within the 50% most deprived areas in Wales.

Table 9-3: LSOAs in Gwynedd Ranked Within 50 per cent Most Deprived or Worse for the Community Safety WIMD Domain

Decile	Most Deprived Indices
50% Most Deprived	11
40% Most Deprived	7
30% Most Deprived	5
20% Most Deprived	5
10% Most Deprived	5
Total	33

9.3.8 With regard to LSOAs, just over 46% of Gwynedd's LSOAs are ranked within the 50% most deprived LSOAs within Wales for community safety. In total 33 LSOAs fall within this category, including five LSOAs ranked within the 10% most deprived nationally. Higher levels of community safety deprivation are concentrated in urban areas around parts of Bangor, Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Blaenau Ffestiniog, while more rural areas and those within Eryri National Park generally exhibit lower levels of deprivation related to community safety.

[76] UK Crime Stats '*North Wales Police'* can be accessed here.
[77] Welsh Government (2023) '*What factors are linked to people feeling safe in their local area?*' can be accessed here.

Equalities data

9.3.9 Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex, and age.

Pregnancy

9.3.10 In relation to pregnancy and maternity, recent national data shows that 26,944 births were recorded in Wales in 2024, this represents the lowest number of births since 1929. Of the 26,944 births, 55% were to mothers aged 30 and over. For the fourth consecutive year, the number of mothers giving birth aged 35-39 exceeded those aged 20-24.[78]

9.3.11 In 2024, the fertility rate in Gwynedd was 1.29 children per woman, the lowest in the North Wales region.[79]

Marriage and civil partnership

9.3.12 Reflecting Living Arrangements data, in 2021 41.2% of people over the age of 16 living in Gwynedd recorded that they were married.[80] This is a decline from the 43.9% recorded in 2011.[81] 40.1% of people in 2021 recorded that they have never been married or registered a civil partnership compared to 36.4% in 2011.[82] In Wales in 2021, 43.8% of all residents over the age of 16 were married or in a civil partnership and 37.2% were recorded as being single (never married or registered a civil partnership).

Age distribution

9.3.13 Age characteristics data taken from the 2021 Census illustrates an ageing population across Wales. Between 2011 and 2021 Census all Local Authority areas across Wales have recorded a growth in the population of older age categories (65+). Gwynedd follows this national trend, with population growth in the 65 to 74, 75 to 84 and 85 and over age groups between 2001 and 2011.[83]

9.3.14 According to 2025 mid-year estimates,[84] Gwynedd has a population of approximately 120,295. Of these, 15.3% are aged 0 to 15, 60.8% are aged 16 to 64, and 23.9% are aged 65 and over. The figure for the latter age group is higher Welsh average of 22.2% indicating that Gwynedd has a larger population of older people compared to other Local Authorities in Wales. It is worth noting that these figures cover the whole county, not just the LDP area.

Sex

9.3.15 As set out above in **Chapter 7**, in 2023[85] it was estimated that there were slightly more females (60,600 equating to 50.8%) than males (58,600 (equating to 49.2%) living in Gwynedd. This compared to 50.9% females and 49.1% males for Wales as a whole.

[78] Welsh Government: '*Maternity and birth statistics: 2024'* (2025) can be accessed here.
[79] Office for National Statistics: '*Births in England and Wales: 2024'* (2025) can be accessed here.
[80] Nomis: '*Gwynedd Local Authority*' (2022) can be accessed here.
[81] Gwynedd Council: '*2011 Census – Statistics for Gwynedd*' (2013) can be accessed here.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Welsh Government (2021) 'Usual resident population by age and local authority*'* can be accessed here.
[84] StatsWales (2025) 'Population density by local authority' can be accessed here.
[85] North Wales Collaborative (2024) '*North Wales area profiles 2024'* can be accessed here.

Sexual orientation

9.3.16 As of 2021, 2.5% of residents within North Wales identify with the LGB+ community (Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other). Gwynedd has the highest percentage of residents who identify with the LGBTQ+ community out of all the North Wales Local Authorities (3.22%).[86]

9.3.17 National hate crime statistics for England and Wales (2021-2022), published in 2022, recorded a 35% increase in hate crimes across Wales compared to 2020-2021, with a total of 6,295 incidents recorded. Of these, 21% (1,329) were sexual orientation hate crimes and 4% (247) were transgender hate crimes. Between April 2021 and March 2022, sexual orientation hate crimes increased by 50%, while transgender hate crimes rose by 43%.[87]

Race

9.3.18 Data from the 2021 Census (**Table 9-4**) shows that Gwynedd is predominantly ethnically White (96.3%). Asian people comprise the second largest ethnic group, accounting for 1.7% of the population, a further 1.1% of the population are Mixed or multiple ethnic groups and 0.4% of the population are Black.

9.3.19 Regarding Wales as a whole, 93.8% identify as White, 3% identified as Asian, 1.6% of identified as Mixed or multiple ethnic groups, and 0.9% of the population are Black.

Table 9-4: People by ethnic group, for Wales and Gwynedd (%).[88]

	Gwynedd	Wales
Asian	1.7	3
Black	0.4	0.9
Mixed	1.1	1.6
White	96.3	93.8
Other	0.5	0.9

Religion

9.3.20 **Table 9-5** shows that Christianity remains the largest religious affiliation in both Gwynedd and Wales, accounting for 46.2% and 43.6% of the population respectively. Gwynedd has a slightly lower proportion of people reporting no religion (44.2%) than Wales as a whole (46.5%). Minority religions each account for a relatively small proportion in both areas, although the proportion of Muslims is lower in Gwynedd (1.0%) than across Wales as a whole (2.2%). Overall, the religious profile of Gwynedd is broadly similar to that of Wales. It is noted that more people respond 'no religion' in Wales when compared to other country statistics.

[86] Office for National Statistics (2021) '*Census maps – sexual orientation'* can be accessed here.
[87] Welsh Government (2023) '*LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales'* can be accessed here.
[88] Stats Wales (2021) '*People by ethnic group Wales and local authorities*' can be accessed here.

Table 9-5: Religious Identification as of 2021 in Gwynedd and Wales (%)[89]

	Gwynedd	Wales
Christian	46.2	43.6
Buddhist	0.4	0.3
Hindu	0.2	0.4
Jewish	0.1	0.1
Muslim	1.0	2.2
Sikh	0	0.1
Other religion	0.7	0.4
No religion	44.2	46.5
Religion not stated	7.6	6.4

Disability[90]

9.3.21 According to the most recent nomis data, 9,805 people are disabled under the Equality Act in Gwynedd[91]. It is important to remember that this includes residents who live within the national park and so the actual figure is expected to be slightly smaller.

9.3.22 The Gwynedd Adult Population Needs Assessment states that as of 2021 there were 20 individuals within Gwynedd who are living with physical disabilities in residential / nursing homes and 12 of these individuals were in out of county placements. Locally, there is insufficient residential/nursing placements to meet the needs of individuals with physical disabilities.

9.3.23 There are 596 individuals on the Learning Disability Register in Gwynedd (September 2022). This number has increased by 9% since (543 individuals) in 2012. However, this increase is smaller than the whole of Wales, which saw a 14% increase in the same time period.

9.3.24 As of 2022, there were 75 individuals over the age of 65 who were on the Learning Disability Register. This number is increasing as older people with learning disabilities are living for longer. Those with a learning disability are also more likely to develop age-related illnesses.

[89] Office for National Statistics (2021) '*Census maps – religion'* can be accessed here.
[90] Gwynedd Council (2022) '*Gwynedd Adults Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027'* can be access here.
[91] Office for National Statistics (2021) '*Gwynedd Local Authority'* can be accessed here.

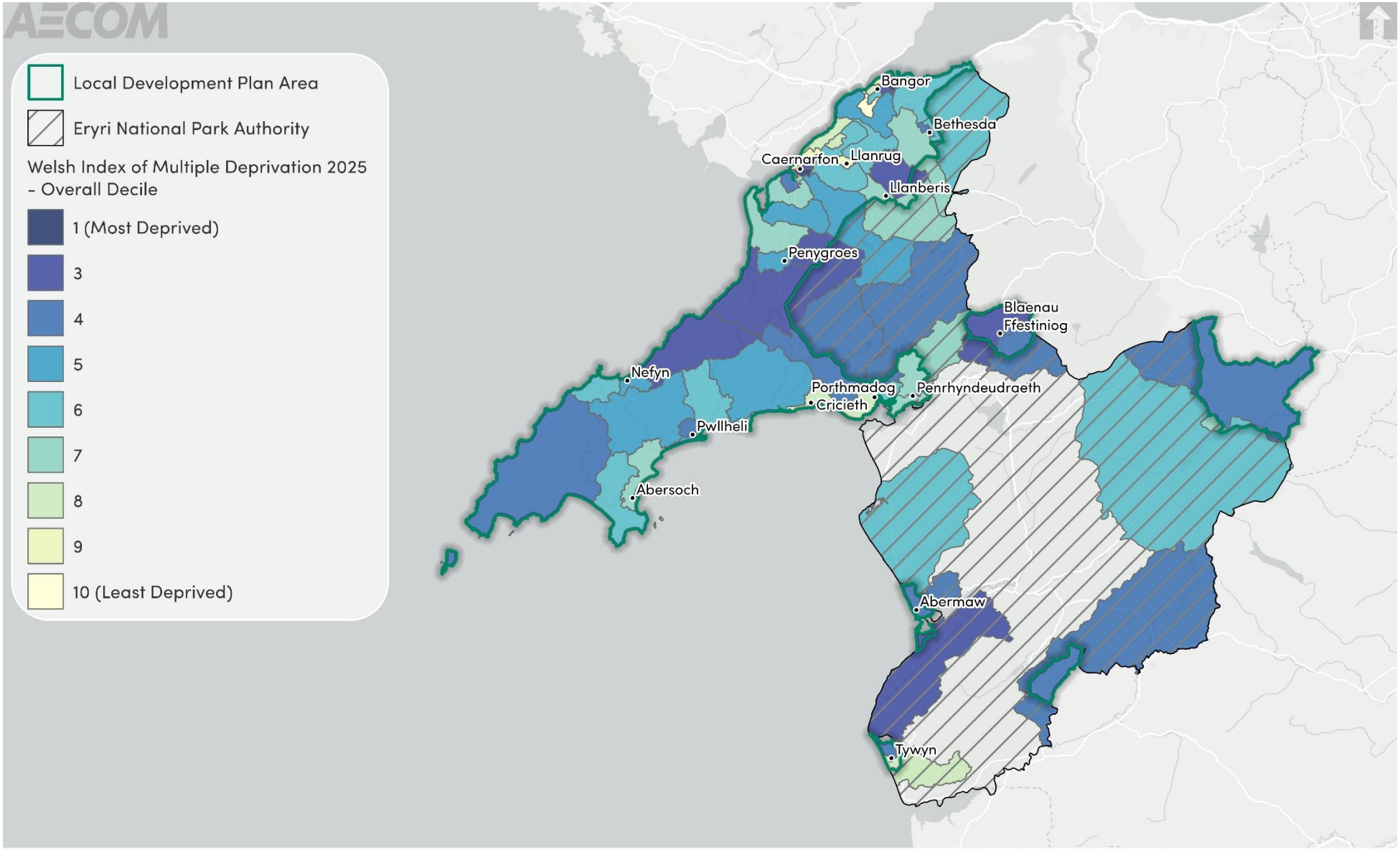


Figure 9-1: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – Overall Decile in Gwynedd

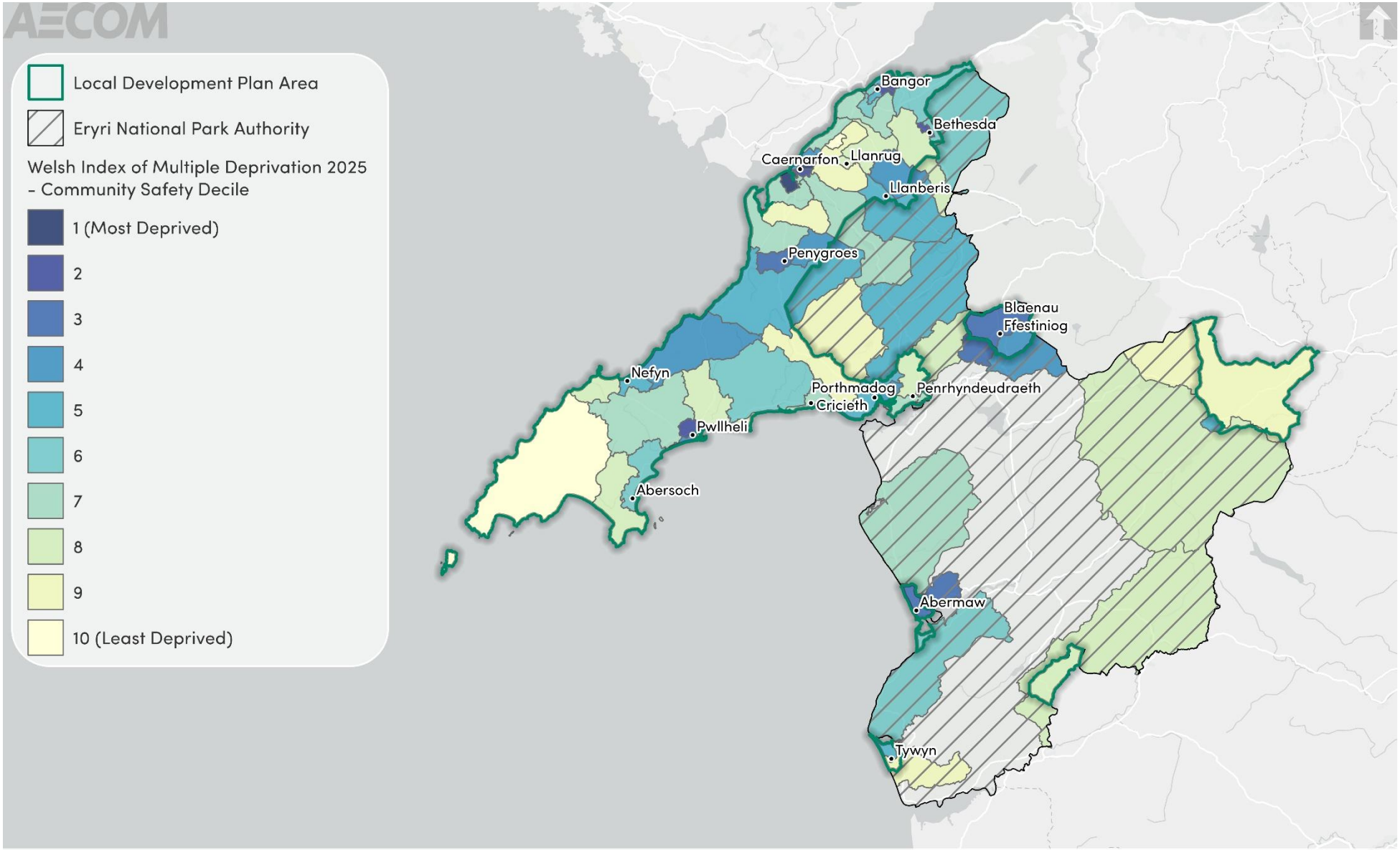


Figure 9-2: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – Community Safety Decile in Gwynedd

9.4 Future baseline

9.4.1 Economic regeneration, alongside community regeneration, are key factors that can transform local neighbourhoods and the lives of local people. New development throughout the LDP area should therefore focus on narrowing the gap between the least and most affluent areas, by addressing areas of everyday activity including employment, health, housing, education, community safety and the environment. Furthermore, it is recognised that Gwynedd has an ageing population, and it will therefore be important to ensure that services can meet the changing needs of the population as they grow older.

9.4.2 Without the adoption of the LDP, existing social and equality trends in Gwynedd are likely to continue. Pockets of deprivation identified through the WIMD 2025 would be expected to persist, with limited scope for targeted interventions to address inequalities. In the absence of updated planning policy, opportunities to support inclusive communities and address deprivation in the LDP area may be missed.

9.4.3 Demographic trends indicate an ageing population with continued growth in the proportion of residents aged 65 and over and comparatively lower proportions of younger age groups. Fertility rates in Gwynedd are low relative to the wider region, and marriage rates have declined between 2011 and 2021, suggesting changing household structures within Gwynedd in the future. Demand for specialist provision, including services for older people and individuals with learning disabilities is expected to increase over time, which could exacerbate existing capacity constraints in local residential and care facilities.

9.5 Key issues

9.5.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- The findings of the Gwynedd Well-being Assessment demonstrate the wide range of factors that contribute towards creating the inequalities that exist in Gwynedd and the complex and inter-related factors that all contribute towards poorer well-being in deprived areas. It will be important for the LDP to take a holistic approach to improving well-being within the authority's more deprived communities, promoting, strengthening and enhancing cultural identity in line with national objectives.
- Gwynedd exhibits considerable socio-economic diversity containing a mix of affluent and deprived communities. Three of the most deprived areas in Wales are within Gwynedd as shown in the latest 2025 Welsh IMD. The LDP can look to address this deprivation through targeted intervention aimed at the most deprived areas in the county.
- Although Gwynedd experiences relatively low overall crime levels and residents generally report feeling safe, there remain pockets of community safety deprivation within a number of urban settlements including Bangor, Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

- Only a small proportion of residents are within minority ethnic, racial, and religious groups.
- Gwynedd has an ageing population, and it will therefore be important to ensure that future development proposals within the new LDP and service provision can meet the changing needs of the population as they grow older.

9.6 ISA Objectives

9.6.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objectives	Assessment questions – will the option/proposal help to:
Reduce poverty and inequality; tackle social exclusion and promote community cohesion.	• Reduce inequalities and deprivation across the LDP area especially in the most deprived wards and hidden areas of deprivation? • Improve equality of opportunities amongst those social groups most in need? • Contribute to a reduction in crime and social disorder and the fear of crime, promoting safer neighbourhoods? • Promote, strengthen, and enhance placemaking principles? • Protect and provide improved local, social, recreational and leisure facilities and access to the natural environment for all sectors of the community, and improve access to them to maximise opportunities for community development and social welfare? • Support the aging population to ensure they do not become socially excluded? • Ensure there is adequate provision of facilities and services for minority groups?

10. Health and well-being

10.1 Introduction to theme

10.1.1 This theme focuses on the general health of the population in the LDP area, as well as access to open space and play facilities, healthcare facilities and active travel.

10.1.2 The approach considers health as encompassing both physical and mental health. Health is influenced by a range of factors (or determinants), spanning environmental, social, behavioural, economic, and institutional dimensions. While this chapter focuses on presenting a population health baseline, it draws on the assessments set out in other chapters of relevance to health.

10.2 Policy context

10.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 10-1**.

Table 10-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to health and well-being

Document title	Year of publication
The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan	2023
North Wales Regional Plan	2023
Gwynedd Well-Being Assessment	2022
Gwynedd Adults Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027	2022
North Wales Population Needs Assessment	2022
North West Wales Area Statement	2021
Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-Being Plan	2018
Public Health (Wales) Act	2017
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017

10.3 Baseline summary

General health

10.3.1 The following trends have been identified in relation to general health in Gwynedd as of 2021.

- For both males and females, Gwynedd has a higher life expectancy than the Welsh average.
- Healthy life expectancy for males and females is also higher than the Wales as a whole.
- WIMD data indicators from 2025 indicate that a chronic condition diagnosis recorded by a GP (percentage per 100) in Gwynedd is 14.1. This is the 5th lowest out of all Welsh Local Authorities.[92]
- There are health inequalities between those living in the least and most deprived areas of Gwynedd.
- According to the Wales Public Health Observatory (2017-2020), nearly 38% of adults aged 16 to 64 have a healthy weight in Gwynedd, this figure is similar to the whole of Wales figure.
- Residents aged 16 and over in Gwynedd generally engage in healthy behaviours above the Welsh average. The percentage of residents that smoke (11%) or consume more alcohol than the guideline (16%) in the county are both lower than the figure for the whole of Wales, where 17% of people smoke and 19% consume more alcohol than the guideline.
- Mental health is an important part of well-being, data from the 2025 WIMD indicates that a mental health condition diagnosis recorded by a GP (per 100 people) is 23.6 people. This figure has risen from 20.3 in 2019, although it is still one of the lowest out of all Welsh Local Authorities.[93]
- The North Wales Population Needs Assessment (2022) identifies certain population groups as being at higher risk than others. It highlights that three quarters of suicide deaths in 2020 were male. The assessment also identifies farmers as a particularly high-risk group, which is of particular significance given the high prevalence of rural communities throughout Gwynedd.
- Mental well-being in the community has also been assessed using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, with data drawn from the national survey for Wales. The scale assigns scores between 14 and 70, with higher scores indicating more positive mental well-being. In Gwynedd, the average score was 52.9 in 2018, comparatively higher than the Wales average of 51.4.
- Future projections for mental health prevalence in Gwynedd predict an overall decrease in the percentage of the population that have a mental health problem, from 14% in 2020 to 13% in 2040.[94]
- Obesity is related to social and health disadvantages, with higher levels in the most disadvantaged populations. Data from 2020 shows that in Gwynedd 57% of the adult population are overweight or obese.[95] Notably, the number of residents who are overweight is one of the highest in North Wales, while the number of residents who are obese is the lowest in North Wales.

[92] Welsh Government: '*WIMD health domain'* (2025) can be accessed here.
[93] Ibid
[94] North Wales Regional Partnership Board: '*Population Needs Assessment'* (2022) can be accessed here.
[95] Ibid.

- Gwynedd has a high rate of childhood obesity within a regional context at 31% of children aged 4-5 being classified as overweight or obese.
- The number of people aged over 65 in Gwynedd with dementia is expected to increase from 2,015 in 2020 to 3,085 in 2040, which represents an increase of 34% in twenty years.[96]

Healthcare facilities

10.3.2 Within the Gwynedd Well-Being Areas in 2020/2021, the average ambulance response time for a 'red' call was varied. The lowest response times were in the Bangor Well-Being Area (06:32 minutes) and the longest in the Bala Well-Being Area (14:32 minutes).[97]

10.3.3 There are five hospitals and 16 GP surgeries located in Gwynedd, as shown by

10.3.4

10.3.5

10.3.6 Figure 10-2.Four of these are within the northern part of Gwynedd, with the remaining one located in Tywyn.

10.3.7 Data from the WIMD 2025 indicate that access to GP services is more limited in Gwynedd than Wales as a whole[98]. The average return time GP

[96] Cyngor Gwynedd (2022) 'Gwynedd Adults Population Needs Assessment' can be accessed here.
[97] Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Service Board: '*Gwynedd Well-Being Assessment'* (2022) can be accessed here.
[98] Stats Wales (no date) '*WIMD 2025: indicator data by LSOA and local authority*' can be accessed here.

surgery by public transport was 70.5 minutes in Gwynedd, compared with 49.1 minutes across Wales. Similarly, the average return travel time by private transport was 10.7 minutes in Gwynedd, compared with 8.15 minutes nationally. Longer travel times can create barriers to accessing healthcare, particularly for people living in rural areas, older people, disabled people, and those who rely on public transport. As a result, these groups may experience greater difficulty in accessing GP services.

Open space and play facilities

10.3.8 Access to open space can have benefits that are both mental and physical. Areas of deficiency may therefore result in a population that does not participate in informal physical activity alongside other secondary effects associated with environmental inequality. In this regard, the adopted Joint LDP contains policies aimed at increasing the provision for and safeguarding existing open space.

10.3.9 Among the provision of open space and play facilities in the LDP area are: Park Glynllifon, Padarn Country Park, eight LNRs, over 50 kilometres of recreational routes, four council managed woodlands, the Llŷn National landscape, the Wales Coastal Path, a network of Public Rights of Way, and a long list of play fields and open spaces spread throughout the plan area.

10.3.10 Despite the availability of play facilities and open spaces throughout Gwynedd, the return public and private travel time to a sports facility is higher in Gwynedd than the average for the whole of Wales, with an average time of 71 minutes and 12 minutes compared to 55 minutes and 10 minutes respectively.[99]

10.3.11 Notably, designated as a Country Park in 1970, Padarn Country Park is rich in historical and environmental heritage and has been part of the Tirwedd Llechi Gogledd Orllewin Cymru, The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales, World Heritage Site since its designation in 2021. The Padarn Country Park provides a range of recreational and education opportunities within a 30 minute drive from Bangor.

10.3.12 The Llŷn National Landscape encompasses nearly 100 miles of coastline and is predominantly coastal in character, while also extending inland to include volcanic peaks such as Garn Fadrun and Garn Boduan. Designated in 1957, the area is recognised for its exceptional natural beauty and the need to conserve and enhance its distinctive landscape. The most recent Management Plan, covering the period 2015-2020, identifies a range of key risks and pressures affecting the National Landscape. These include the impacts of climate change, inappropriate development, uncontrolled heathland fires, tourism-related pressures, fragmentation of habitats and wider socio-economic pressures facing local communities.[100]

[99] Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Service Board: '*Gwynedd Well-Being Assessment*' (2022) can be accessed here.
[100] Natural Resources Wales: '*Llŷn area of outstanding natural beauty*' (2015) can be accessed here.

Active travel

10.3.13 As well as maintaining the existing active travel network, Cyngor Gwynedd are actively seeking to introduce new active travel routes to facilitate more active travel within communities in the plan area[101].

10.3.14 The number of households owning at least one car or van increased between the 2011 and 2021 Census. Despite this, the proportion of the population commuting using a car or van fell from 70.4% to 61.35%. Over the same period, the proportion of residents working mainly at or from home rose from 6.85% to 22.51%[102]. However, the 2021 Census took place during COVID-19 restrictions when many people were working from home. The fall in car commuting could therefore reflect temporary pandemic conditions rather than a lasting shift in travel behaviour.

10.3.15 The Welsh Government's Active Travel Action Plan for Wales (2016)[103] sets out the vision: "For people in Wales, we want walking and cycling to become the preferred ways of getting around over shorter distances".

[101] Cyngor Gwynedd (no date). '*Active Travel*' can be accessed here.
[102] Cyngor Gwynedd (2025): 'Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 7th Annual Monitoring Report' can be accessed here.
[103] Welsh Government (2016): 'An Active Travel Action Plan for Wales' can be accessed here.

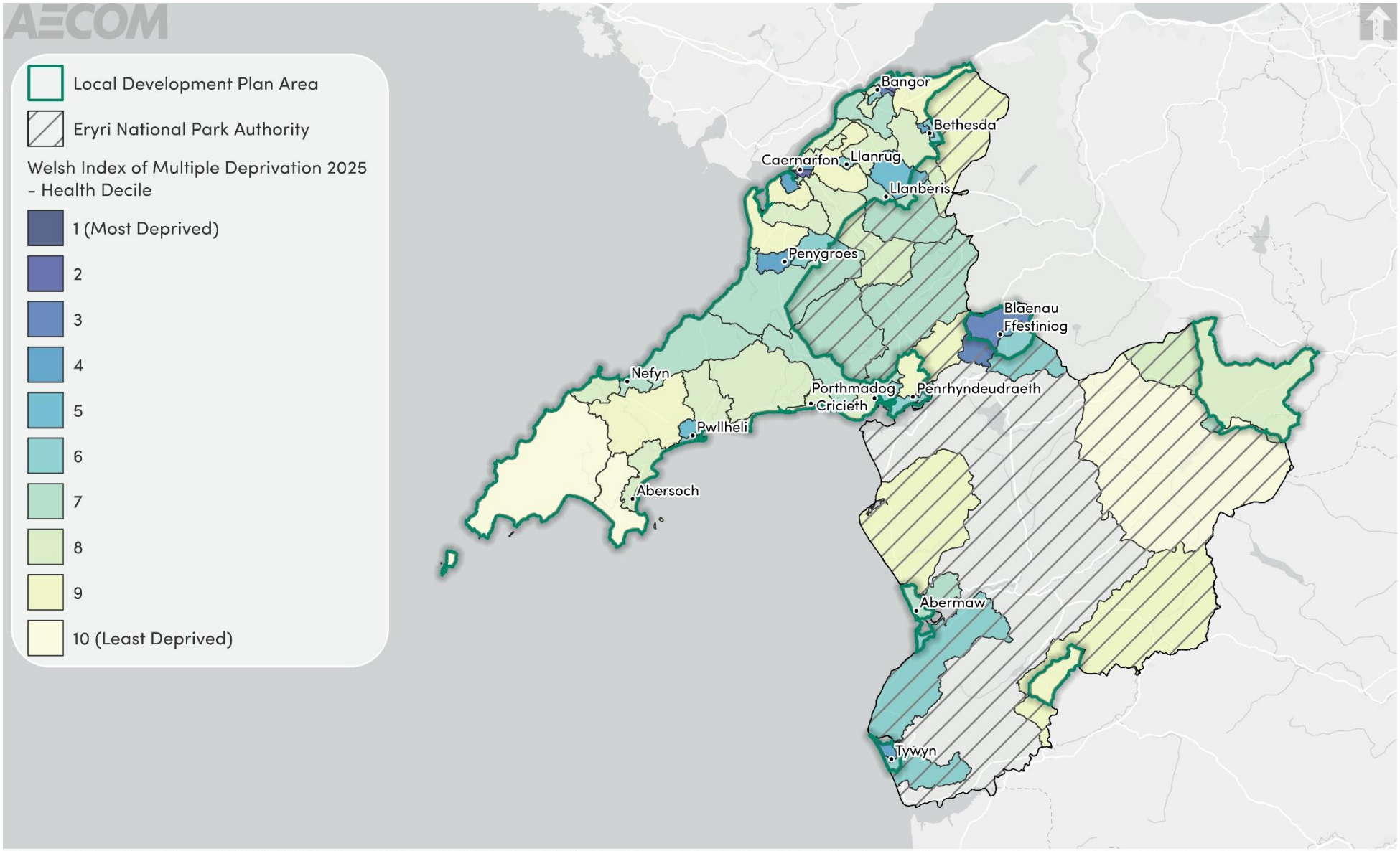
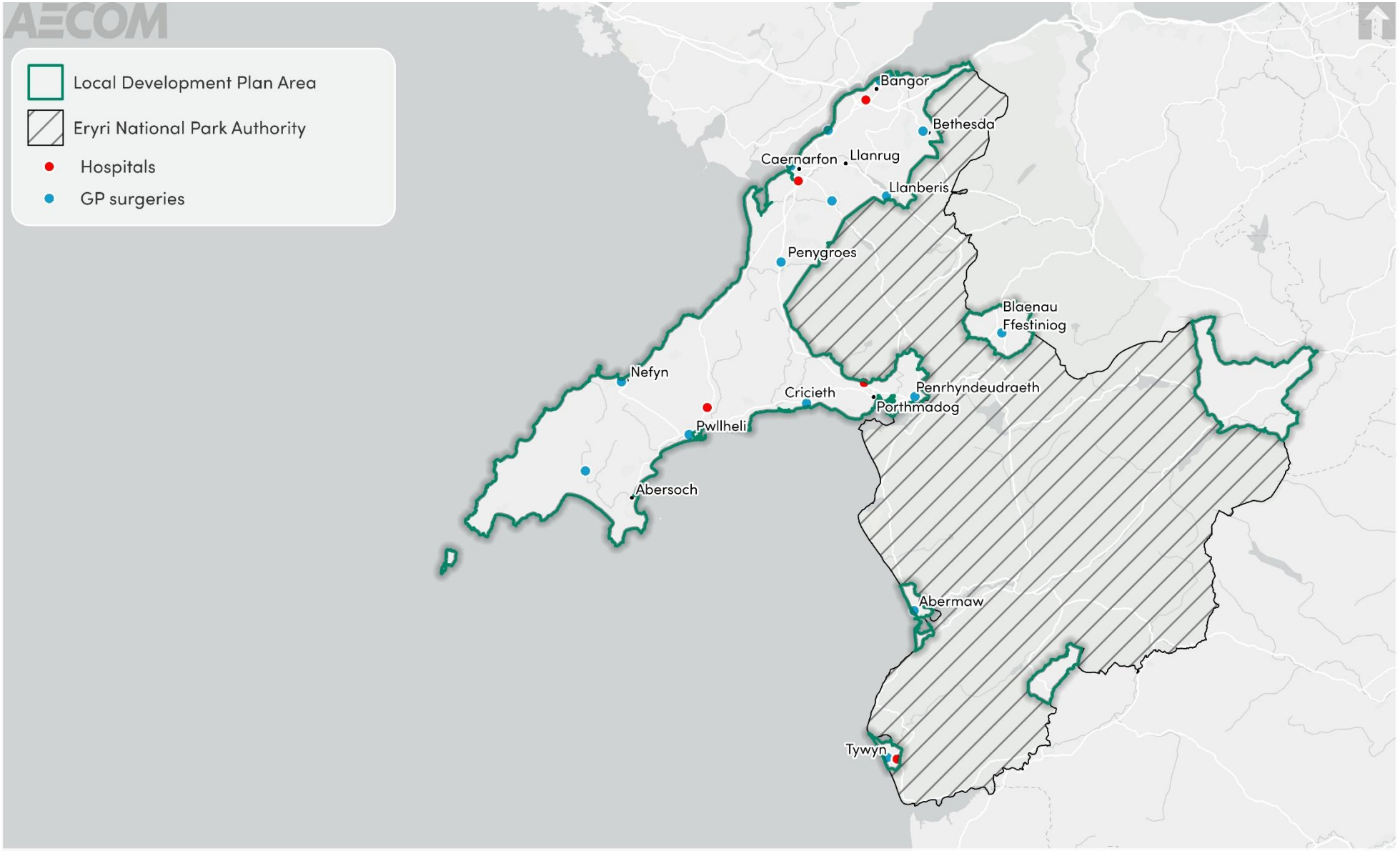


Figure 10-1: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation – Health Decile in Gwynedd



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026.

Figure 10-2: Hospitals in the Gwynedd LDP area

10.4 Future baseline

10.4.1 The population of Gwynedd overall shows a good level of health, with the prevalence of mental health conditions expected to drop by 2040. Despite this, a larger percentage of the population are overweight or obese which could have health implications for the population in the future given the link between obesity and mental and physical health conditions.

10.4.2 Physical and mental health outcomes are shaped by a broad range of individual and environmental determinants, so the long-term future health baseline for Gwynedd's population is highly uncertain. However, as set out in **Chapter 7**, the county's population is projected to grow over the plan period, with the greatest increase among residents aged 65 and over. An ageing population is likely to increase demand for health and social care services, accessible housing and community facilities. Without an up-to-date LDP, new development is less likely to plan for the specific needs of an ageing population in suitable locations. This could place growing pressure on existing services, particularly in more rural parts of the county, and could widen existing health inequalities.

10.4.3 In the absence of the new LDP, positive change for health and wellbeing in Gwynedd is still likely to come forward. National policy and legislation would continue to support access to green space, the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure, the expansion of active travel networks and the provision of community facilities. However, without an up-to-date LDP, improvements are less likely to be strategically located to maximise benefits for the communities that need them most.

10.5 Key issues

10.5.1 The contextual review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- General health of Gwynedd residents is good. Adults enjoy longer life expectancies when compared to Wales as a whole for both males and females.
- Publicly accessible open space is present throughout the LDP area, with Country Parks, and a National Landscape spread throughout the plan area. However, in urban areas open space is fragmented and lacks connectivity.
- The LDP should therefore focus on improving access to green spaces and connectivity to green spaces maintaining and enhancing active travel networks and green infrastructure networks, meeting community infrastructure needs, etc. throughout the LDP area. This is likely to support long term improvements in pockets of deprivation where they exist, improving the overall health and wellbeing of residents. Equality of access to facilities, services, green spaces, retail and leisure is crucial to enable people to improve and maintain good health and wellbeing
- The Gwynedd Well-Being Assessment highlights that travel time to sports facilities within the plan area is notably higher than the Welsh average.

- Active travel networks are good, notably the active travel network extends throughout the LDP area, with active travel routes focused on the main settlements. This provision connects people and places, delivering health improvements through a modal shift, particularly for shorter journeys. Cyngor Gwynedd continues to develop an active travel network within the authority.
- Gwynedd has a higher proportion of its residents classed as being overweight or obese compared to the Welsh average. The high prevalence of childhood obesity is also concerning, given the health implications linked to obesity. The LDP will play an important role in combating this issue, particularly by encouraging greater active travel uptake, encouraging healthy lifestyles and open space provision.
- The provision of healthcare facilities within Gwynedd are concentrated around the main settlements in the plan area.
- While healthcare assets seem relatively well placed in the plan area, greater accessibility for those most at risk of suffering poor health outcomes should be sought, particularly in the more deprived areas, as discussed in **Chapter 2**. Furthermore, given the expected rise in population in Gwynedd over the plan period, efforts should be made to incorporate health facility provision into development where relevant.
- By 2043, the county is expected to have an even higher percentage of its residents aged 65 and over. The LDP will play an important role in addressing this issue, particularly through appropriate housing, facilities and healthcare provisions for people who fall within this category.

10.7 ISA objectives

10.7.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objectives	Assessment questions – will the option/proposal help to:
Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the LDP area, promoting healthy and sustainable places.	• Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities through provision of open space, play spaces, food growing, and community spaces? • Facilitate good access to healthcare, social, recreational and leisure facilities for all sectors of the community? • Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure networks and connectivity throughout the plan area? • Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green spaces? • Improve access to open spaces, the countryside and leisure and recreation facilities? • Support healthy / active and inclusive environments? • Support the creation of cohesive, connected communities? • Provide formal and informal, and natural play spaces for children which are safe and easy and safe to access? • Reduce health inequalities across the LDP area? • Support active travel and improvements to air quality?

11. Historic environment

11.1 Introduction to theme

11.1.1 This theme focuses on designated and non-designated historic assets (including archaeology) and their setting.

11.2 Policy context

11.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**.

Table 11-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to Historic Environment

Document title	Year of publication
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017

11.3 Baseline summary

World Heritage Sites

11.3.1 UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) are designated for having cultural, historical, scientific, or other forms of global significance. Sites are judged to contain cultural or natural (or mixed) heritage considered to be of Outstanding Universal Value.[104]

11.3.2 As show in **Figure 11-1**, there are two WHS in LDP area, one of which is split into six sub-areas:

- Tirwedd Llechi Gogledd Orllewin Cymru, The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales, was designated in 2021 and is split into the following six sub-areas:
  - Bryneglwys Slate Quarry, Abergynolwyn Village and the Talyllyn Railway.
  - Dinorwig Slate Quarry Mountain Landscape.
  - Ffestiniog: its Slate mines and Quarries, 'city of slates' and Railway to Porthmadog.
  - Gorseddau and Prince of Wales Slate Quarries, Railways and Mill.
  - Nantlle Valley Slate Quarry Landscape.
  - Penrhyn Slate Quarry and Bethesda, and the Ogwen Valley to Port Penrhyn.
- Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd was designated in 1986.

[104] UNESCO (2026). 'UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the UK and Overseas Territories' can be accessed here.

11.3.3 Tirwedd Llechi Gogledd Orllewin Cymru illustrates the transformation that industrial slate quarrying and mining brought about in the traditional rural environment of the mountains and valleys of the Snowdon massif. The territory, extending from mountain-top to sea-coast, presented opportunities and constraints that were used and challenged by the large-scale industrial processes undertaken by landowners and capital investors, which reshaped the agricultural landscape into an industrial centre for slate production during the Industrial Revolution (1780-1914). The serial property comprises six components each encompassing relict quarries and mines, archaeological sites related to slate industrial processing, historical settlements, both living and relict, historic gardens and grand country houses, ports, harbours and quays, and railway and road systems illustrating the functional and social linkages of the relict slate industrial landscape. The property was internationally significant not only for the export of slates, but also for the export of technology and skilled workers from the 1780s to the early 20th century. It played a leading role in the field and constituted a model for other slate quarries in different parts of the world. It offers an important and remarkable example of interchange of materials, technology and human values.[105]

11.3.4 The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd WHS covers the castles of Beaumaris and Harlech (largely the work of the greatest military engineer of the time, James of St George) and the fortified complexes of Caernarfon and Conwy are located in the former principality of Gwynedd, in north Wales. These extremely well-preserved monuments are examples of the colonisation and defence works carried out throughout the reign of Edward I (1272–1307) and the military architecture of the time.[106]

Listed buildings

11.3.5 The LDP area currently has 2,543 Listed Buildings whose special architectural or historic interest is protected by the need to obtain Listed Building Consent under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The setting of such buildings is often critical to the character and significance of the building, and can be restricted to its immediate site or extend to a much wider area.

11.3.6 Of the 2,543 listed buildings within the LDP area, 38 are Grade I Listed, 129 are Grade II* listed and 2,376 are Grade II listed.

11.3.7 **Figure 11-2** shows the density of Listed Buildings in Gwynedd. Listed Buildings can be found throughout Gwynedd, although higher concentrations of Listed Buildings are generally observed in urban areas, with lower densities across the more rural areas.

Scheduled Monuments (SMs)

11.3.8 There are 216 SMs designated throughout Gwynedd. **Figure 11-3** shows the distribution of SMs throughout Gwynedd. Overall, SM are found throughout Gwynedd, with notable concentrations surrounding Bethesda and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

[105] UNESCO (2026). 'The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales' can be accessed here.
[106] UNESCO (2026). 'Castles and Town Walls of Kin Edward in Gwynedd' can be accessed here.

Registered Parks and Gardens

11.3.9 There are 3 Registered Parks and Gardens present within the LDP area as shown in **Figure 11-3**

Conservation Areas

11.3.10 Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which is desirable to preserve or enhance. Quality of place is the prime consideration in their identification. What makes an area special may be the result of the combination of street patterns, relationship with buildings and spaces, building styles and characteristics, open spaces, landscape and topographical features. Designation as a Conservation Area gives statutory recognition to such areas. Their designation places a duty on Gwynedd to ensure that any new development which is otherwise acceptable preserves or enhances the special character of the area.[107]

11.3.11 There are 42 Conservation Areas within the LDP area, the distribution of which are shown in **Figure 11-3**.

Register of Historic Interest in Wales

11.3.12 The landscape of Wales is a vital resource for social, economic and environmental wellbeing. It is also historic — shaped by centuries of human activity and rich in evidence of the past. To recognise the value of historic landscapes and to raise awareness of their importance, Cadw has compiled a register of landscapes of historic interest in Wales.[108]

11.3.13 Within Gwynedd there are 12 areas on the Register of Historic Landscapes in Wales. These are further discussed in **Chapter 13**.

Archaeology

11.3.14 Gwynedd has considerable archaeological interest, more information about Gwynedd's archaeology can be found here.

[107] Cyngor Gwynedd (no date). 'Conservation Areas: A Guide For Property Owners' can be accessed here.
[108] Cadw (2026). 'Registered historic landscapes' can be accessed here.

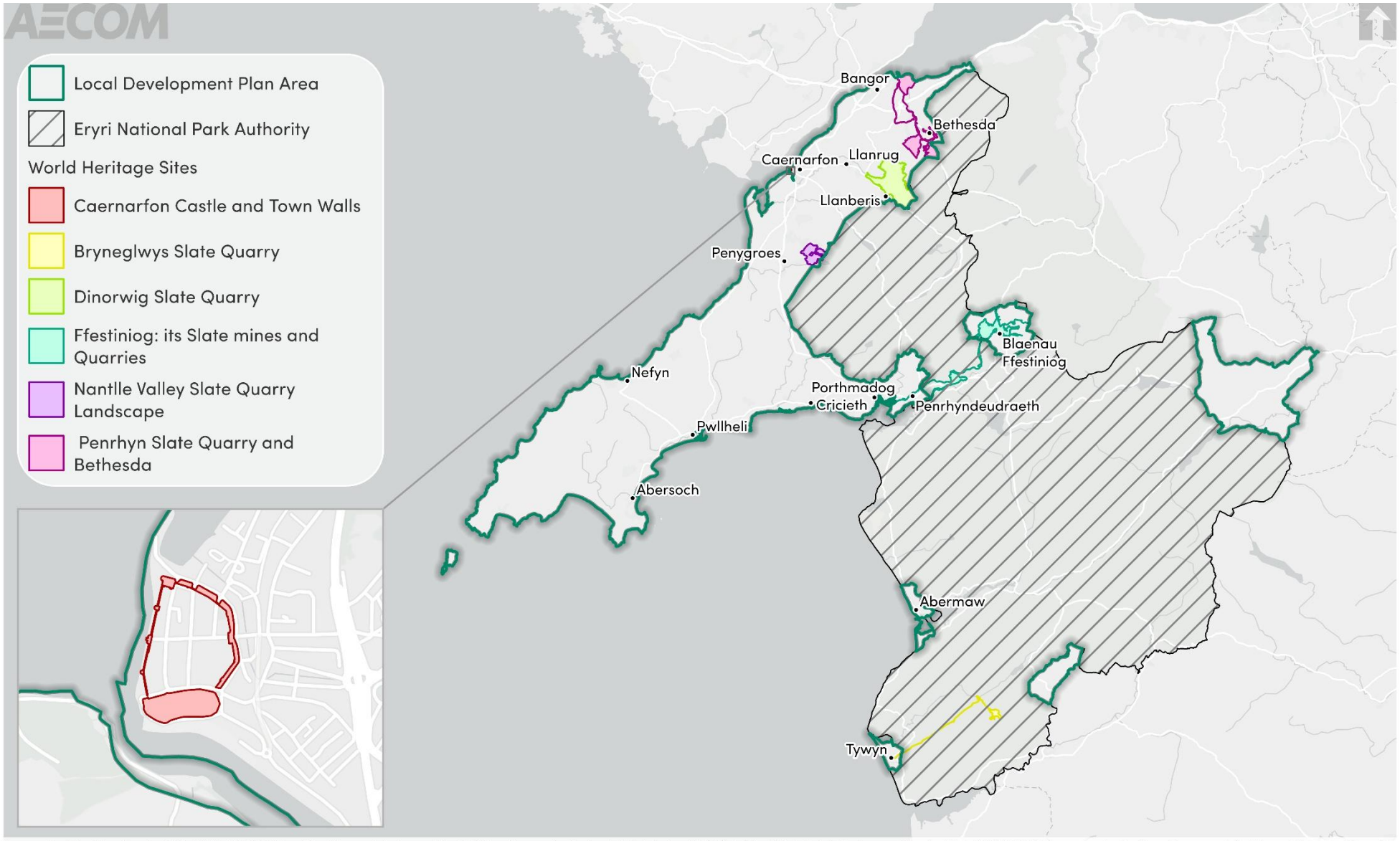
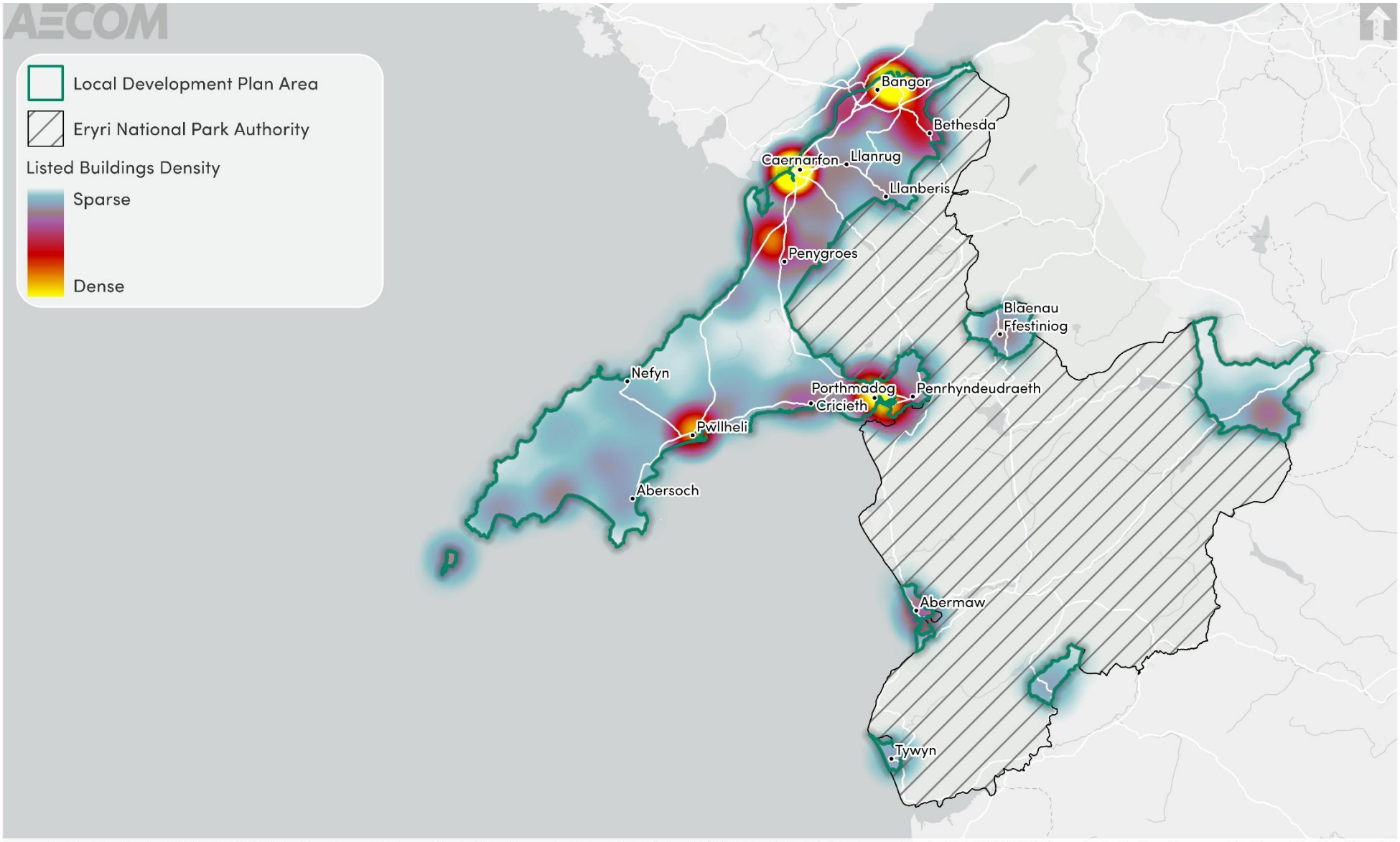


Figure 11-1: World Heritage Sites in Gwynedd



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Designated Historic Asset GIS Data, The Welsh Historic Environment Service (Cadw), 03/06/2026, licensed under the Open Government Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026.

Figure 11-2: Listed Building density within and in proximity to Gwynedd

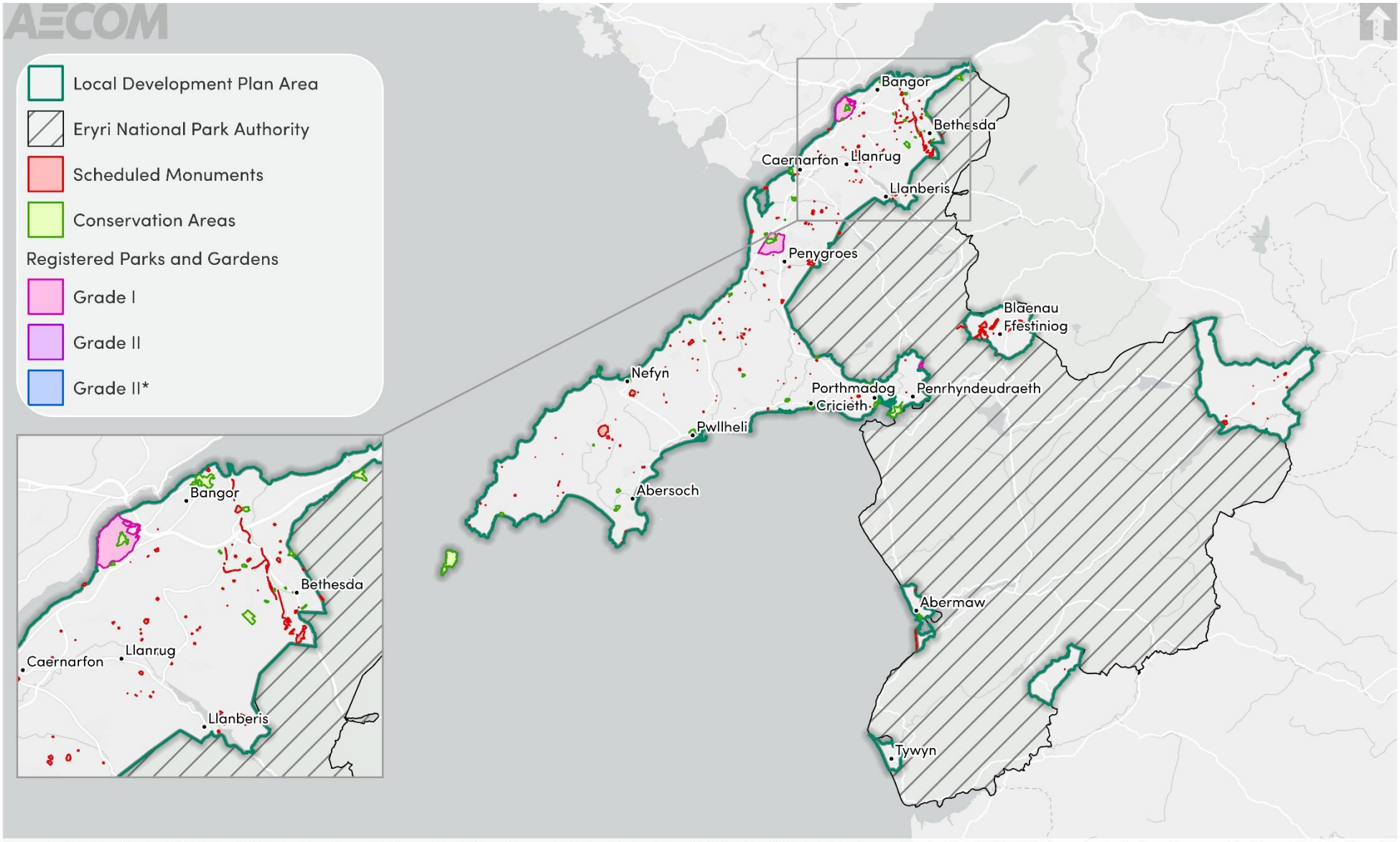


Figure 11-3: Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas within and in proximity to Gwynedd

11.4 Future baseline

11.4.1 Growth through a new LDP has the potential to deliver housing development within proximity to heritage assets, areas and features that may not have previously been within proximity to the built environment. This presents the possibility for the setting of the historic environment to be changed – either positively, or negatively, depending on the locations and types of development, and design schemes selected.

11.4.2 It is recognised that new growth through the LDP could result in a greater understanding of the historic environment in Gwynedd. For example, new growth could result in the need for archaeological investigations in areas that had been previously undeveloped. This could result in new contributions to the heritage and history of the LDP area.

11.4.3 In the absence of a new LDP, designated and non-designated historic assets are likely to continue to be afforded protection through national planning policy, as well as currently adopted Joint LDP policies.

11.4.4 In the absence of a new LDP, potential opportunities could be missed to improve the landscape / townscape and therefore enhance the historic environment. This is especially important for the two WHS designations, which are located across the LDP area, as localised issues may impact the unique areas / features in different ways.

11.5 Key issues

11.5.1 The contextual review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- The LDP area has a rich historic environment, reflected in its WHS designations, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, and conservation areas. Local heritage in the LDP area is also a key consideration, reflected through the historic landscapes and local HER. As such, heritage is an important contributor the environment of the LDP area and of value to its community. It will be important to ensure that the significance of the historic environment is maintained through the LDP, and opportunities to enhance specific assets or wider areas should be taken advantage of (where appropriate).
- Given that the new LDP could result in growth coming forward in previously undeveloped areas within the LDP area, it will be important for appropriate archaeological investigations to be undertaken, to ensure important historic features are documented and not lost / destroyed.

11.6 ISA objectives

11.6.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objectives	Assessment questions – will the option/proposal help to:
Preserve and enhance the LDP area's heritage resource, including its historic environment and archaeological assets and promote understanding of the LDp area's cultural heritage.	• Preserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural and/ or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting? • Preserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of conservation areas and their settings? • Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, and archaeologically sensitive areas, and support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic and cultural environment, including the Welsh language?

12. Housing

12.1 Introduction to theme

12.1.1 This theme focuses on meeting housing needs, including affordable housing, housing mix (size, type and tenure), and specialist accommodation needs.

12.2 Policy context

12.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 12-1**.

Table 12-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to housing

Document title	Year of publication
Managing the Use of Dwellings as Holiday Homes	2025
North Wales Regional Plan	2023
The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan	2023
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	2022
North Wales Population Needs Assessment	2022
Anglesey and Gwynedd Supplementary Planning Guidance Housing Mix	2018
Gwynedd Local Housing Market Assessment	2018
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017

12.3 Baseline summary

Population

12.3.1 As noted in **Chapter 7**, Gwynedd's latest mid-year population estimate is 119,150 people. This is an increase from 117,393 people in the 2021 Census.

12.3.2 Whilst Gwynedd has a large proportion of people aged 16-65 (61.9% in 2023), it is estimated that approximately 22.1% of the population were aged 66 and above in 2023. This is higher than the average for Wales as a whole (20.3% in 2023). As such, Gwynedd is experiencing an ageing population – and population projections estimate that by 2042 the percentage of the population aged 65 and over will have increased more rapidly. This has an implication for future housing needs.

Housing stock (type and size)

12.3.3 Household projections for Wales show that there were an estimated 53,601 households in Gwynedd in 2025.[109] This is the 9th lowest number of estimated households by Local Authorities in Wales. Many properties in the county are detached (34.7%) or terraced (29.9%) at proportions significantly higher than the Welsh average. In comparison, the number of semi-detached homes (25.4%) is significantly below the Welsh average.

12.3.4 According to NOMIS data, the majority of properties in Gwynedd have three bedrooms (47.1%). Two bedroom dwellings contribute 24.8% of the housing stock, one bedroom dwellings 6.4%, and properties with four or more bedrooms 21.6%.[110]

12.3.5 In terms of housing delivery, monitoring data indicates that between 2011 and 2024, the Joint LDP has delivered 2,687 units in the LDP area which equates to an annual average of 206 units per annum. This is 22.9% below the plan's annual requirement of 247.5 units, or 3,487 units in total.[111]

Tenure and affordability

12.3.6 Homeownership is the dominant tenure in Gwynedd, with 63.4% of households owning their homes outright or with a mortgage. This is slightly less than the national average for Wales (66.1%). Social renting in Gwynedd accounts for 18.2% of households, and private renting accounts for 17.9%. In comparison, social renting is higher in Gwynedd in comparison to the average for Wales (16.5%), as is private renting (17%).[112]

12.3.7 As identified in the 2022-based housing projections for 2025, most households in Gwynedd in 2025 are estimated to be one person households (34.1%), followed by two person households containing no children (31.5%).[113]

12.3.8 The HM Land Registry data (UK House Price Index) indicates that the average house price in Gwynedd in 2010 was £132,300, which was higher than the Welsh average of £124.012. However, house prices have slowly risen since then, although slower than the Welsh average. In 2025 the average house price in Gwynedd was £196,071, compared to the whole Welsh average of £208,458.[114]

12.3.9 The LDP area has one of the highest numbers of second homes in Wales, driven by the thriving tourist economy in the region. This high level of second home ownership contributes towards rising property costs in the plan area. Cyngor Gwynedd recognises that empty houses can cause a nuisance in a neighbourhood, and can be a waste of housing stock. As such, Cyngor Gwynedd outlines a number of measures (including the Gwynedd Empty Homes Grant Scheme) to help reduce this number.[115]

[109] Welsh Government '*2022-based household projections by local authority, household type, year and variant'* (2025) can be accessed here.
[110] ONS (2021): 'TS050 – Number of bedrooms' can be accessed here.
[111] Cyngor Gwynedd (2025): 'Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026: Annual Monitoring Report – Gwynedd 1April 2024-31 March 2025' can be accessed here.
[112] ONS (2021): 'TS054 – Tenure' can be accessed here.
[113] Ibid
[114] HM Land Registry Open Data *'UK House Price Index Data' (2025)* [online]. Available here.
[115] Cyngor Gwynedd (2026): 'Empty homes' can be accessed here.

12.3.10 The housing WIMD domain identifies inadequate housing in terms of physical living conditions and availability. Further detail on the WIMD housing domain can be found in **Chapter 2**.

Housing growth and planned development

12.3.11 A growing population continues to drive housing demand in the LDP area. In the adopted Joint LDP, Bangor is identified as a sub-regional centre, and Blaenau Ffestiniog, Caernarfon, Porthmadog and Pwllheli are identified as urban service centres. It is anticipated that future growth through the emerging LDP will also be focused within these areas, as well as within local service centres – which include (but are not limited to) Abermaw, Llanberis, and Tywyn.

Infrastructure and services

12.3.12 There are a range of infrastructure and services within LDP area that support its communities. The LDP area benefits from multi-modal transport links including road and rail links to major population centres. As such, essential services such as educational and health facilities and recreational amenities are accessible, with a greater concentration of such infrastructure in the more urban parts of the LDP area.

Homelessness

12.3.13 Homelessness is associated with severe poverty and is a social determinant of health. It often results from a combination of events such as relationship breakdowns, debt, and adverse experiences in childhood and through ill health.

12.3.14 Although out of date, the North Wales Regional Homelessness Strategy seeks to address the root causes of homelessness across the six participating authorities. In 2018, the household waiting list was 7,022; 509 people were in temporary accommodation, and 84 were sleeping rough across North Wales.[116]

Specialist housing need

12.3.15 The Joint LDP identified affordable housing as a key priority. The plan was seeking to provide a minimum of 1,572 affordable homes over the plan period. In practice, a total of 716 affordable homes has been built in the LDP area over the period from 2015-2025.[117]

12.3.16 The Local Housing Market Assessment (2018) identifies the need for affordable housing to be the highest in the wellbeing areas of Llyn, Dolgellau, Porthmadog and Tywyn, with over 60% of households priced out of the market in all these areas. The Blaenau area is the most affordable with 48% of households priced out of the market.[118]

[116] North Wales Authorities (2018): 'People, homes and services: A regional approach to tackling homelessness in North Wales' can be accessed here.
[117] Cyngor Gwynedd (2025): 'Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026: Annual Monitoring Report – Gwynedd 1April 2024-31 March 2025' can be accessed here.
[118] Cyngor Gwynedd (2019): 'Gwynedd Local Housing Market Assessment 2018-23' can be accessed here

Gypsy and traveller

12.3.17 The most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2022) identifies two residential Gypsy and Traveller sites in Gwynedd, which together provide 13 occupied pitches[119]. These comprise of the local authority Greenacres site at Llandygai, near Bangor, which has 12 pitches, and an unauthorised single-pitch site.

12.3.18 The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2022) identifies an unment need for seven additional residential pitches in Gwynedd over the five years till 2025, rising to 11 pitches to 2036.

12.3.19 Earlier evidence identified the most appropriate locations for additional gypsy and traveller accommodation includes Bangor, Bethesda, Caernarfon, Penygroes, Penhyndeudraeth, Porthmadog, and Y Felinheli.[120]

[119] Cyngor Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council (2022) '*Gypsy and Traveller Acommodation Assessment*' can be acessed here.
[120] Bangor University (2013): 'Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment' can be accessed here.

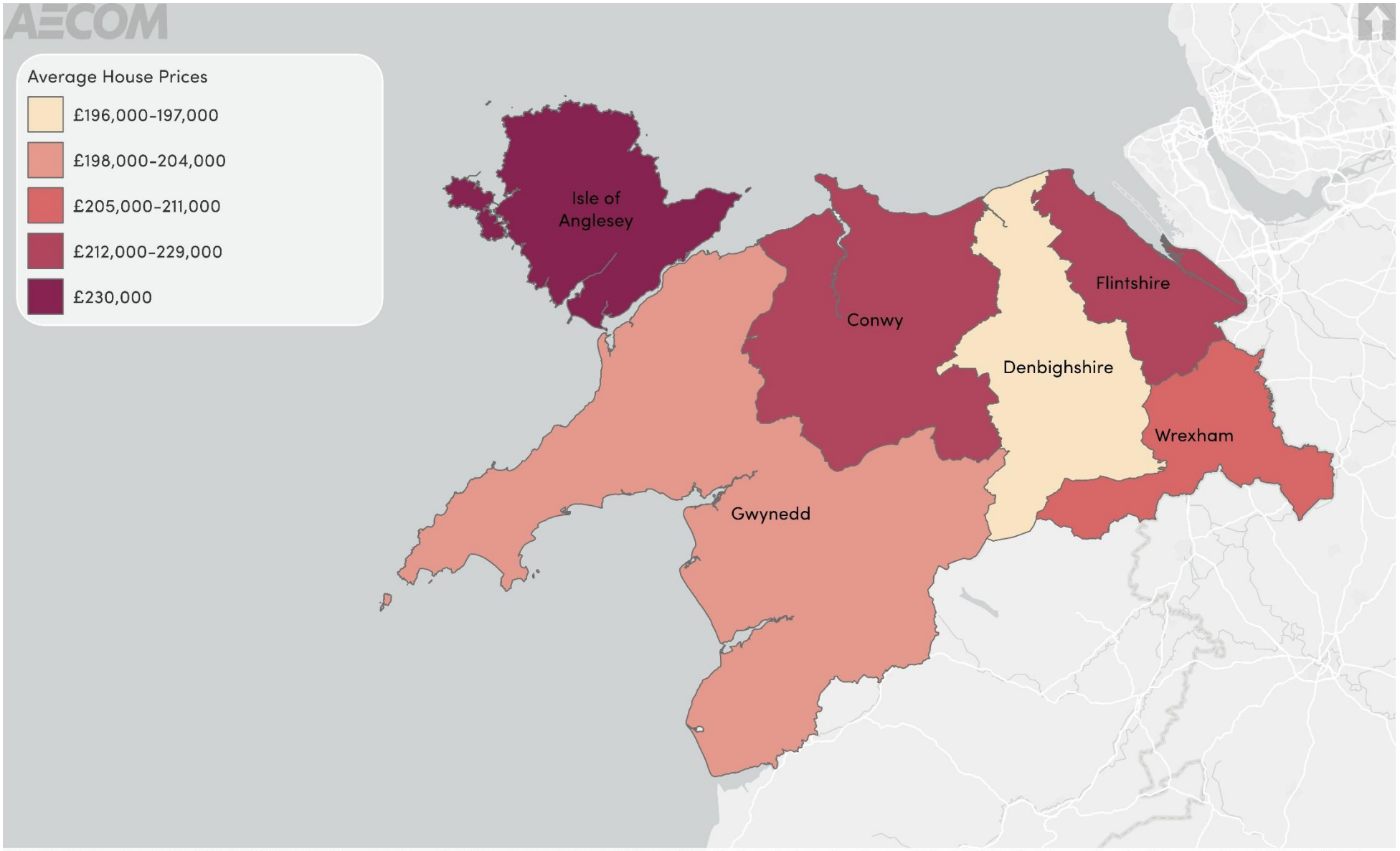


Figure 12-1: Average house prices in each of the local authorities in North Wales

12.4 Future baseline

12.4.1 Gwynedd is predicted to be the fastest growing population in North Wales, and it is anticipated that the predicted increase in the population will have far reaching impacts, affecting the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the county. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of delivering the right type, tenure and size of housing in suitably connected places. Continued development of unsuitable housing types and tenures may introduce or exacerbate a housing imbalance and fail to meet any local needs, particularly when considering the ageing population, the need for affordable housing and the high prevalence of second home ownership.

12.5 Key issues

12.5.1 The context review and baseline informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- Gwynedd's population has experienced an increase. Whilst it is a small increase, it is still likely to increase pressure on housing supply and affordability. This is due to the housing stock being unable to meet the needs of the population – for example, three bedroom homes are unlikely to service the identified ageing population in Gwynedd.
- High property prices contribute to an increase in the number of residents unable to enter the private property market despite a year-on-year increase in the numbers of households in the County. The LDP could seek to enhance policy provisions that deliver the right mix of housing types, tenures, and sizes according to local needs, in suitably connected places.
- The LDP area has one of the highest numbers of second homes in Wales, largely driven by the tourist economy in the North West Wales region. This high level of second home ownership also contributes towards rising property costs in the plan area.
- The LDP should seek to investigate the latest position in terms of specialist housing needs and accommodate these in the growth strategy. This includes pitches for Gypsy and Traveller communities and specialist housing for the elderly.

12.7 ISA objective

12.7.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objectives	Assessment questions – will the option/proposal help to:
Support the delivery of a range of housing to meet identified needs, with a focus on improving affordability for those most in need?	• Increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing for all residents, including lower-income and vulnerable groups? • Deliver a balanced housing mix that meets the needs of different household types, including smaller homes and specialist housing for older people? • Address homelessness and provide appropriate accommodation for gypsy and traveller communities? • Ensure that housing growth is supported by adequate infrastructure, services, and community facilities?

13. Landscape

13.1 Introduction to theme

13.1.1 This theme focuses on designated and protected landscapes within or near to the LDP area, as well as landscape character, landscape quality and visual amenity.

13.2 Policy context

13.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**.

Table 13-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to Landscape

Document title	Year of publication
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017

13.3 Baseline summary

National Parks

Proposed Glyndŵr National Park

13.3.1 It is noted that Natural Resources Wales have consulted on a new proposed National Park - Glyndŵr National Park. This is based on the existing Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape – and part of the proposed National Park would be within Gwynedd Local Plnning Authority. Consultation was undertaken in 2025 (September - December), and Cyngor Gwynedd objected to the proposal for a new National Park, citing concerns over a number of issues, including potential impacts to the Welsh language, lack of clarity over what type of planning service will operate in the National Park, and funding issues.[121]

13.3.2 In January 2026, Natural Resources Wale Public Board decided to make the designation order[122] - The Welsh Government will further consider the proposal for a new National Park based on the existing Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) following a Public Notice period (16th January to 15th February 2026) and on receipt of information and evidence, including consultation responses.[123]

National Landscapes

13.3.3 Within the LDP area is the Llŷn National Landscape, which was designated in 1957. It is renowned for its diverse and interesting coastline and beautiful

[121] Natural Resources Wales (2025): 'Proposed Glyndŵr National Park (Designation) Order 2025 Statutory Consultation Report' can be accessed here.
[122] Natural Resources Wales (2026): 'NRW Public Board meeting 12 January 2026' can be accessed here.
[123] Natural Resources Wales (2026): 'Glyndŵr National Park Designation Order Public Notice 2026' can be accessed here.

landscape, encompassing around 15,500 hectares of the Llŷn Peninsula. Special qualities for the Llŷn National Landscape include[124]:

- Landscape and coast.
- Tranquillity and a clean environment.
- A wealth of wildlife.
- The Historic environment.
- The Welsh Language and Culture.
- People and close-knit communities.
- Local produce and rural businesses.
- Rights of way and access.

13.3.4 Though not within Gwynedd, the Anglesey National Landscape is located adjacent to the north. Its special qualities include (but are not limited to): expansive views / seascapes, rural agricultural / coastal communities, peace and tranquillity, and the public rights of way network.[125] It is possible that the LDP area contributes to the setting of the designated landscape.

13.3.5 Designated as a National Park in 1951, Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park is the largest National Park in Wales – it includes an area of approximately 213,200 hectares, and is located across parts of Gwynedd and Conwy.[126] It has nine special qualities, which help to determine what should be safeguarded and enhanced in the National Park[127] including; diverse landscapes, community cohesion, vibrancy of the welsh language, inspiration for the arts, tranquillity and solitude, recreation, leisure and learning, historic landscapes, renowned geology, and international important species and habitats.

National Landscape Character Areas (NLCAs)

13.3.6 NLCAs are defined at a broad landscape scale throughout Wales. The descriptive profiles for the 48 individual character areas highlight what distinguishes one landscape from another, with reference to their regionally distinct natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics.[128]

13.3.7 Many environmental resilience and planning challenges are best considered at a ‘landscape-scale’. The NLCA policy-neutral descriptions can contribute to the development of national and regional policy, strategy or guidelines.

13.3.8 Within the LDP area are the following NLCAs:

- NLCA03 – Arfon: the land that is ‘against Anglesey’, the lowland area bounded by the Menai Strait, the Eryri foothills and glaciated valleys. It includes the Anglo-Norman boroughs of Caernarfon and the university city of Bangor – and the coastal plateau includes the Norman Penrhyn Castle and its associated estate. The landscape is also an example of

[124] Cyngor Gwynedd (no date): ‘Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2015-2020’ can be accessed here.
[125] Isle of Anglesey County Council (no date): ‘Anglesey Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2023-2028’ can be accessed here.
[126] Eryri National Park (2019): ‘Eryri Local Development Plan 2016-2031’ can be accessed here.
[127] Eryri National Park (2020): ‘Cynllun Eryri: The National Park Partnership Plan 2020’ can be accessed here.
[128] Natural Resources Wales (2023). ‘National Landscape Character Areas (NCLA)’ can be accessed here.

the Welsh gwerin, which influences the built form and population of the area.[129]

- NLCA05 - Bae Tremadog / Tremadoc Bay: the northern crook of Cardigan Bay, this area is a lowland coastal region, with sandy estuaries, dune-backed beaches, and agricultural hinterland. It contrasts with the adjacent and enclosing mountains. The area has many villages but retains a rural, agricultural character except in and around the towns of Barmouth, Porthmadog, and Pwllheli. The area remains very popular for tourism, providing visitors with a very distinct Welsh experience.[130]
- NLCA15 - Bro Llangollen a Dyffryn Dyfrdwy / Vale of Llangollen and Dee Valley: a deep valley that contributes a gateway to North Wales. There are more modern elements juxtaposed with more historical structures, dramatic cliffs and screes, and limestone landscapes – all of which contribute to the cultural associations of the area.[131]
- NLCA06 – Eryri: an extensive, rural upland area that is largely associated with the Snowdonia National Park. It is dominated by mountain ranges, and encompasses many of the country's uplands. There are also numerous glacial features – demonstrating its geological diversity. However, it does have areas of settlement – including ancient settlements and borough towns. It is a popular tourism area.[132]
- NLCA22 - Glannau Aberdyfi / Aberdovey Coast: a largely estuarine and coastal landscape where Wales is at its narrowest width from east to west. The coastline is backed by dunes, and there is the largest coastal raised bog in Britain adjacent to the Dyfi. There are also wooded hillsides and open flat flood plain, and salt-marsh grazing. The settlements and the coastline form busy areas in an otherwise rural and scenic area.[133]
- NLCA04 – Llŷn: a broad and iconic promontory extending into the Irish Sea, it is largely characterised by coastal lowlands against a backdrop of hills. It provides panoramic views across Caernarfon Bay to Anglesey, and over Tremadoc Bay to the Rhinogydd. It includes the National Landscape, and a number of settlements that are popular with tourists and campers for their sheltered and sandy beaches.[134]
- NLCA10 - Mynydd Hiraethog: a desolate but scenically attractive landscape that comprises of a gently undulating upland moorland plateau. It has been partially afforested, but other areas include extensive tracts of blanket bog, heather moorland, and a significant variety of archaeological sites. There has been much human activity in the area, though it has been sparsely inhabited. It is a popular area for outdoor activities.[135]
- NLCA16 - Y Berwyn: this area is sparsely settled, mostly covered by extensive tracts of open moorland which is often heather-clad. There are a few settlements, which are located in the lower reaches of the main valleys. The area can be popular with visitors that are wanting to

[129] Natural Resources Wales (2014): 'NLCA03 Arfon' can be accessed here.
[130] Natural Resources Wales (2014): 'NLCA05 Tremadoc Bay' can be accessed here.
[131] Natural Resources Wales (2014): 'NLCA15 Vale of Llangollen and Dee Valley' can be accessed here.
[132] Natural Resources (2014): 'NLCA06 Eryri' can be accessed here.
[133] Natural Resources Wales (2014): 'NLCA22 Aberdyfi Coast' can be accessed here.
[134] Natural Resources Wales (2014): 'NLCA04 Llŷn' can be accessed here.
[135] Natural Resources Wales (2014): 'NLCA10 Mynydd Hiraethog' can be accessed here.

experience the geomorphological features of the area, such as waterfalls, and glaciated valleys.[136]

Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs)

13.3.9 Landscape character areas are unique and have their own particular identity. They allow for a strategic approach to classifying the landscape – grouping parts of the landscape together that are or a similar nature. Within Gwynedd there are 16 local landscape character areas[137].

Marine Character Areas (MCAs)

13.3.10 Seascapes, like landscapes, reflect the relationship between people and place and the part it plays in forming the setting to our everyday lives.

13.3.11 Marine Character Areas highlight the key natural, cultural and perceptual influences that make the character of each seascape distinct and unique. NRW were commissioned on behalf of Welsh Government to identify the character of Wales' seascapes at a broad scale. They divided Wales' inshore waters into 29 Marine Character Areas.[138]

13.3.12 As shown in **Figure 13-3** the Gwynedd area extends across six MCAs; the Caernarfon Bay, Llyn and Bardsey Island, Tremadog Bay and Dwyryd Estuary, Cardigan Bay (North) and Estuaries, Menai Strait, and Red Wharf and Conwys Bay.

13.3.13 Caernarfon Bay MCA contains the coastal and inner waters of Caernarfon Bay. It includes the Insland Sea, Malltraeth Bay and Malltraeth Sands, sand and mudflats that spill out from the Menai Strait, and components of both the local Anglesey and Gwynedd seascape character areas. Its boundaries are informed by information on Marine Charts, based on a navigational perspective[139].

13.3.14 Llŷn and Bardsey Island MCA encompasses the waters surrounding the north, west and southern coastline of the Llŷn Peninsula. Boundary lines in the south of the MCA are informed by sediment geology and marine charts, indicating areas of rougher water (and shallows) that are associated with Devil's Ridge, Bastram's Shoal, Caswenan Rock and Bardsey Island. The distinctive break in bedrock geology along the western and northern peninsula (from mudstone-dominated to slate and siltstone) is used to inform the offshore extent of the MCA, in conjunction with bathymetry.[140]

13.3.15 Tremadog Bay and Dwyryd Estuary MCA encompasses the shallow waters of Tremadog Bay, nestled between the Llŷn Peninsula and the Eryri coast. It is characterised by shallower waters (informed by bathymetry) and markedly lower wave climate/wave exposure compared with the surrounding MCAs. The rocky reef of Sarn Badrig forms the southern MCA boundary, with associated rough, shallow waters as marked on the Marine Charts[141].

[136] Natural Resources Wales (2014): 'NLCA30 Y Berywn' can be accessed here.
[137] Cyngor Gwynedd (2009): 'Supplementary Planning Guidance: Landscape Character' can be accessed here
[138] Natural Resource Wales (2023): 'Marine Character Areas' can be accessed here.
[139] Natural Resources Wales (2015): 'Marine Character Areas MCA11 Caernarfon Bay' can be accessed here.
[140] Natural Resources Wales (2015): 'Marine Character Areas MCA 13 Llŷn and Bardsey Island' can be accessed here.
[141] Natural Resources Wales (2015): 'Marine Character Areas MCA 14 Tremadog Bay and Dwyryd Estuary' can be accessed here.

13.3.16 Cardigan Bay (North) and Estuaries MCA comprises the coastal waters of the northern part of Cardigan Bay, stretching from Harlech in the north to Clarech Bay in the south. The Mawddach and Dyfi estuaries drain into this part of the bay. The northern and north-western boundaries take in the rough, shallow waters (<10m) associated with Sarn Badrig, including areas of high energy rock and high energy sub-littoral sediment. This contrasts with the calmer gently shelving waters which characterise Tremadog Bay to the north.[142]

13.3.17 Menai Strait MCA covers the main channelled section of the strait, from Abermenai Point to the fringes of Lavan Sands. It is characterised by a glacially-eroded bedrock trough with very complex tidal patterns, numerous shipwrecks, and its role in commercial and recreational shipping.[143]

13.3.18 Red Wharf and Conwy Bays MCA stretches from Great Orme's Head to the Moelfre headland. It is characterised by three bays along with their associated sand banks and sediments, and bathymetry and offshore sediment geology.[144]

Registered Landscapes of Outstanding and Special Interest in Wales

13.3.19 The landscapes of Wales have been formed by natural processes and shaped by human activity. This human activity ranges from the prehistoric periods through to the modern age. To recognise the value of historic landscapes, and to raise awareness of their importance, Cadw, in partnership with Natural Resources Wales and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS UK) has compiled a non-statutory Register of 58 landscapes of outstanding or special historic interest in Wales.[145]

13.3.20 The Register of Historic Landscapes is a non-statutory, advisory register. Its primary aim is to provide information and raise awareness of an initial selection of the most important and significant historic landscape areas in Wales in order to aid their protection and conservation.

13.3.21 The registered landscapes within Gwynedd are shown in **Figure 13-4.**

Special Landscape Areas

13.3.22 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are a non-statutory designation applied by a local authority to define areas of high landscape importance within their administrative boundary.

13.3.23 There are ten SLAs within the LDP area.[146] These are:

- Bala Hinterland
- Bangor Mountain and Minffordd rural hinterland
- Barmouth Bay.

[142] Natural Resources Wales (2015): 'Cardigan Bay (North) and Estuaries' can be accessed here.
[143] Natural Resources Wales (2015): 'Marine Character Areas MCA 10 Menai Strait' can be accessed here.
[144] Natural Resources Wales (2015): 'Marine Character Areas MCA 03 Red Wharf and Conwy Bays' can be accessed here.
[145]DataMap Wales (2014): 'The Registered Landscapes of Outstanding and of Special Interest in Wales' can be accessed here.
[146] LUC (2012): 'Review of Special Landscape Areas in Gwynedd and Anglesey Prepared for the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Planning Policy Unit (JPPU)' can be accessed here.

- Corris
- Foryd Bay
- Glaslyn and Dywryd Estuary Landscapes
- North-Western Fringes of Snowdonia
- Prothmadog and Tremadog Bay
- Vaynol Estate and Surrounds
- Western Llyn

13.3.24 **Figure 13-5** displays the location of each of these SLAs. Further detail about each is provided in **Table 13-2** overleaf.

Table 13-2: Special Landscape Area characteristics

SLA Name	Need	Special qualities	Visual and sensory overall evaluation
Bangor Mountain and Minffordd rural hinterland (previously named Bangor Mountain in LUC assessment)	The distinctive landform feature of Bangor Mountain and its undeveloped, naturalistic character forms an attractive setting to the city and softens the transition from built development to open countryside. The location of the SLA undoubtedly means it is under pressure for development extending out from the city centre. Its popularity for recreation is a further pressure that could be managed sensitively through SLA designation.	• Its distinctive landform and undeveloped character. • Important views to and from the city of Bangor and its function as a distinctive setting to the city. • Its mosaic of habitats – mixed woodland, rough grassland, scrub – which provide important local wildlife refuges. • The cultural significance of the eastern part of the landscape as part of the area's 19th and 20th century slate mining industry – within the Ogwen Valley Landscape of Outstanding Historic Importance. • The intervisibility between the SLA and the Menai Strait, Anglesey National Landscape and Eryri National Park. • Its role in softening the transition between development, open countryside and the National Park. • Its popularity for informal recreation. • Its levels of relative tranquillity and naturalness in the context of its location within development.	Moderate

SLA Name	Need	Special qualities	Visual and sensory overall evaluation
Barmouth Bay	The SLA provides an important coastal setting and 'gateway' to the Eryri National Park, with strong functional and visual links between the two. Due to its location outside the National Park and popularity of the coastal resort of Barmouth, the area is already under pressure from tourism-related development. Fairbourne – a modern, nucleated 'holiday village' – lies along the southern SLA boundary.	• Its function as a unique setting and strong, coherent character which provide a coastal gateway to Eryri. • Marked contrast between the broad, open estuary, and the rising valley sides and upland fringe. • Expansive vistas and long distance views to the coastline, up and down the estuary and to the prominent mountains of the National Park. • Its historic and cultural significance, including evidence of diverse land use and activity from prehistoric and later periods (within the Mawddach Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest). • The range of nationally and internationally important coastal, estuarine and upland fringe habitats within the Lleyn Peninsula & the Sarnau SAC, Mawddach Estuary SSSI, Barmouth Hillside SSSI and Meirionnydd Oakwoods and Bat Sites SAC. • Victorian town of Barmouth with attractive Victorian frontages. • Its tranquil and scenic qualities.	Low to high

SLA Name	Need	Special qualities	Visual and sensory overall evaluation
Corris	The SLA acts as a gateway to Eryri National Park and Gwynedd, from Powys. Whilst the landscape has been shaped by industrial activities in the past, it now contains important cultural and historical relics of the Welsh mining industry, and very strong visual and historical links to and from the protected landscape. The area is under pressure from tourism related development. In addition, forestry operations and linear developments along the main A487 present drivers for change within this landscape.	• Its remote, strongly rural character. • The historic and cultural fabric of the landscape, such as relic slate quarries and buried remains. • Valued swathes of semi-natural broadleaved woodland, rush pasture and remnant heathland. • The sparsely settled character in much of the SLA, with distinctive vernacular settlement typically built from slate. • The cultural / historic and visual relationship between the SLA and the National Park.	Moderate to high
Foryd Bay	The southern banks of the Menai Strait have experienced a significant spread of modern development extending out from the main towns of Bangor and Caernarfon. The SLA represents one of the few locations where modern development is absent. However there has been some interest in tourism related development which could impact upon the setting of the nearby World Heritage Site in Caernarfon and Anglesey National Landscape. It is an important SLA which retains the naturalistic setting of the Menai Strait	• The open and highly naturalistic character of the landscape. • Its function as a valued, undeveloped setting to the Menai Strait and Anglesey National Landscape. • The international importance of its coastal and wetland habitats – particularly for wintering wildfowl and waders (part of the Menai Strait and Conwy Bay SAC, a SSSI and a LNR). • The historic and cultural significance of the landscape, including for	Moderate to high

SLA Name	Need	Special qualities	Visual and sensory overall evaluation
	and the National Landscape across the water.	defence and industrial development (including the 18th Century Fort Belan and the Cored Gwyrfai Fish Weir – a Scheduled Monument). • The open views inland towards Eryri National Park and significant views towards the Anglesey National Landscape on the opposite shore. • Its undeveloped and largely inaccessible character.	
Glaslyn and Dwryrd Estuary Landscapes	The SLA acts as a gateway to Eryri National Park, which forms the inland boundary of the area. Whilst sparsely settled and with an overall absence of modern development, the SLA abuts the settlements of Porthmadog, Minffordd and Penrhyndeudraeth. This includes commercial / industrial development on their fringes, which is beginning to encroach into the surrounding landscape. The SLA is under pressure from large scale infrastructure including masts and pylons.	• The peaceful, rural and generally open character of the landscape. • The strong cultural and visual relationship between the SLA and the National Park (particularly views to the Cnicht and Moelwyn mountains). • The naturalistic land cover, with drained pastures and coastal grazing marsh, mudflats and sand banks, broadleaved woodland and scrub on higher ground, and open water. • Nationally and internationally valued habitats within the Morfa Harlech SSSI and NNR; Pen Llŷn a Sarnau SAC, Glaslyn SSSI, and the Meirionnydd Oakwoods& Bat Sites SSSI.	Moderate to outstanding

SLA Name	Need	Special qualities	Visual and sensory overall evaluation
		• The sparsely settled character with the distinctive Italianate settlement at Portmeirion (a Conservation Area). • The historic and cultural significance of the landscape, entirely within the Aberglaslyn Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales.	
Vaynol Estate and Surrounds (previously named Menai in LUC assessment)	The southern bank of the Menai Strait has experienced a significant spread of modern development extending out from the main towns of Bangor and Caernarfon. The SLA represents one of the few locations where modern development is (such as the Menai Business Park) is well integrated into its wooded landscape setting. The SLA enhances the naturalistic wooded setting of the Menai Strait and the significant views of the Anglesey National Landscape across the water.	• The strong cultural and historic character of the landscape, particularly the Grade I Registered Park and Garden of the Faynol Estate (which lies within the wider Dinorwig Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest). • The presence of nationally important historic buildings and monuments within the estate's ornamental parkland setting. • The landscape's function as a valued setting to the adjacent Menai Strait and Anglesey National Landscape. • The national importance of its sessile oak, hazel and ash woodlands on the rocky slopes above the Menai Strait shoreline (within the Coedydd Afon Menai SSSI) and the proximity of internationally important intertidal	Moderate to high

SLA Name	Need	Special qualities	Visual and sensory overall evaluation
		habitats within the Menai Straits and Conwy Bay SAC. • Its intervisibility with Eryri National Park to the south, the Anglesey National Landscape and the Conwy coastline. • Its high levels of relative tranquillity and large areas free from modern development.	
North-Western Fringes of Snowdonia	The SLA forms a 'buffer' around the National Park enhancing and protecting its setting to enable a gradual transition from the protected landscape to its surrounding rural hinterland. The area is under pressure from tourism (with linked development and road traffic), particularly around the gateway town of Llanberis, as well as large-scale infrastructure including masts and pylons.	• The rugged upland qualities of the landscape, with strong feelings of remoteness on hill summits. • The open character of the uplands and hill summits, contrasting with the enclosed small-scale farmland and mining villages below. • Valued tracts of semi-natural habitat (including acid grassland, heathland, wetland scrub and oak woodland), including parts of the Snowdonia / Eryri SSSI and SAC, Llyn Padarn SSSI, Coed Dinorwig SSSI / LNR, and Moel Tryfan SSSI. • The historic and cultural significance of the landscape, particularly its slate mining heritage within the Ogwen Valley, Dinorwig and Nantle Valley	Low to outstanding

SLA Name	Need	Special qualities	Visual and sensory overall evaluation
		Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest. • The landscape's function as a distant backdrop to the Llŷn and Anglesey National Landscapes. • The strong cultural and visual relationship between the SLA and Eryri National Park.	
Bala Hinterland (previously named Penllyn in LUC assessment)	The SLA provides an important function as a setting to Eryri and rural 'gateway' into the National Park from the east. Due to its location outside the protected landscape and the proximity of the settlement of Bala, the SLA is under pressure from increasing development along the river valley floodplain and the linear spread of development along the A494. The elevated nature of the landscape means that demand for wind energy development and their possible cumulative effects is a key issue, with the operational Braich Ddu Wind Farm located within the east of the SLA.	• The intimate, tranquil and rural character of the landscape. • The elevated and open position of the upland areas – creating strong intervisibility across the landscape, including with Eryri National Park. • Internationally and nationally valued pockets of semi-natural habitat, including alder carr and mire (Cors y Sarnau SSSI), species-rich hay meadows and wet pasture (Caernau Uchaf SSSI), riparian habitats and species (River Dee SSSI and SAC) and pockets of dry heath and blanket bog (Berwyn SSSI, SAC and SPA). • Its strong historic character, particularly along the River Dee (a Landscape of Special Historic Interest).	Moderate to high

SLA Name	Need	Special qualities	Visual and sensory overall evaluation
		• The dispersed settlement pattern of nucleated villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads. • The landscape's important role as a setting to the Eryri National Park and other uplands outside the Study Area (e.g. Berwyn Mountains).	
Porthmadog and Tremadog Bay	The SLA provides an important function as a setting and coastal 'gateway' to Eryri. Due to its location outside the National Park and popularity of the coast, the area is under pressure from tourism development (e.g. caravan/beach development around Morfa Bychan). Other development pressures include proposals for major infrastructure and the linear spread of development along the roads into Porthmadog.	• The rural and tranquil character of the landscape • The long, sweeping views across the Afon Glaslyn estuary, Traeth Bach, the coast and the mountains of Eryri. • The varied land cover patterns, with irregular fields bounded by stone walls and interspersed with blocks of open rough grazing land and woodland. • The valued areas of semi-natural habitat (unimproved grassland, heathland, woodland, sand dunes and coastal wetlands), including Tiroedd a Glannau Rhwng Cricieth ac Afon Glaslyn SSSI and the Pen Llŷn and Sarnau SAC. • The lightly settled character of dispersed hamlets and isolated dwellings.	Moderate to high

SLA Name	Need	Special qualities	Visual and sensory overall evaluation
		• The landscape's important role as a setting to Eryri National Park and backdrop to the historic town of Porthmadog.	
Western Llŷn	The SLA sits directly adjacent to the Llŷn National Landscape. The area is under pressure from tourism-related developments, particularly in the south (e.g. around the resorts of Abersoch and Pwllheli). The elevated and exposed nature of the landscape means that demand for wind energy development and their cumulative effects is a key issue, with southerly slopes also likely to attract proposals for solar photovoltaics.	• The tranquil and rural character of the landscape. • Its elevated and open position– creating strong intervisibility across the peninsula, including significant views to the National Landscape. • The intricate landscape patterns: including areas of small-scale, irregular fields and 19th century smallholdings. • The outstanding array of historic and archaeological features, within the Llyn and Bardsey Island Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. • Valued pockets of semi-natural habitat, including heathland, mire and fen (e.g. Cors Hirdre and Cors Geirch SSSIs). • The dispersed settlement pattern of nucleated villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads.	Moderate to high

SLA Name	Need	Special qualities	Visual and sensory overall evaluation
		• The landscape's important role as a setting to the Llŷn National Landscape.	

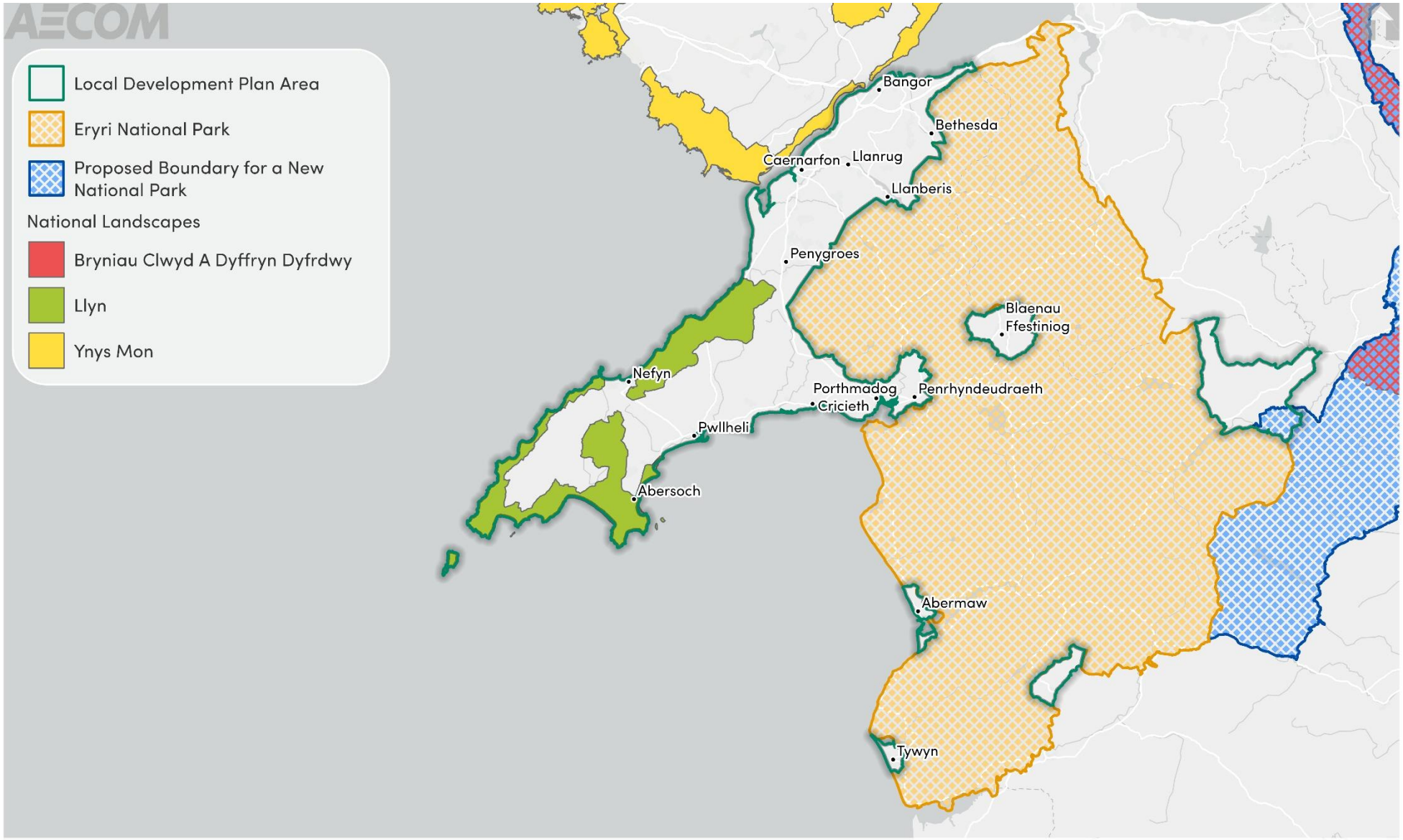


Figure 13-1: National Landscapes and National Parks within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area

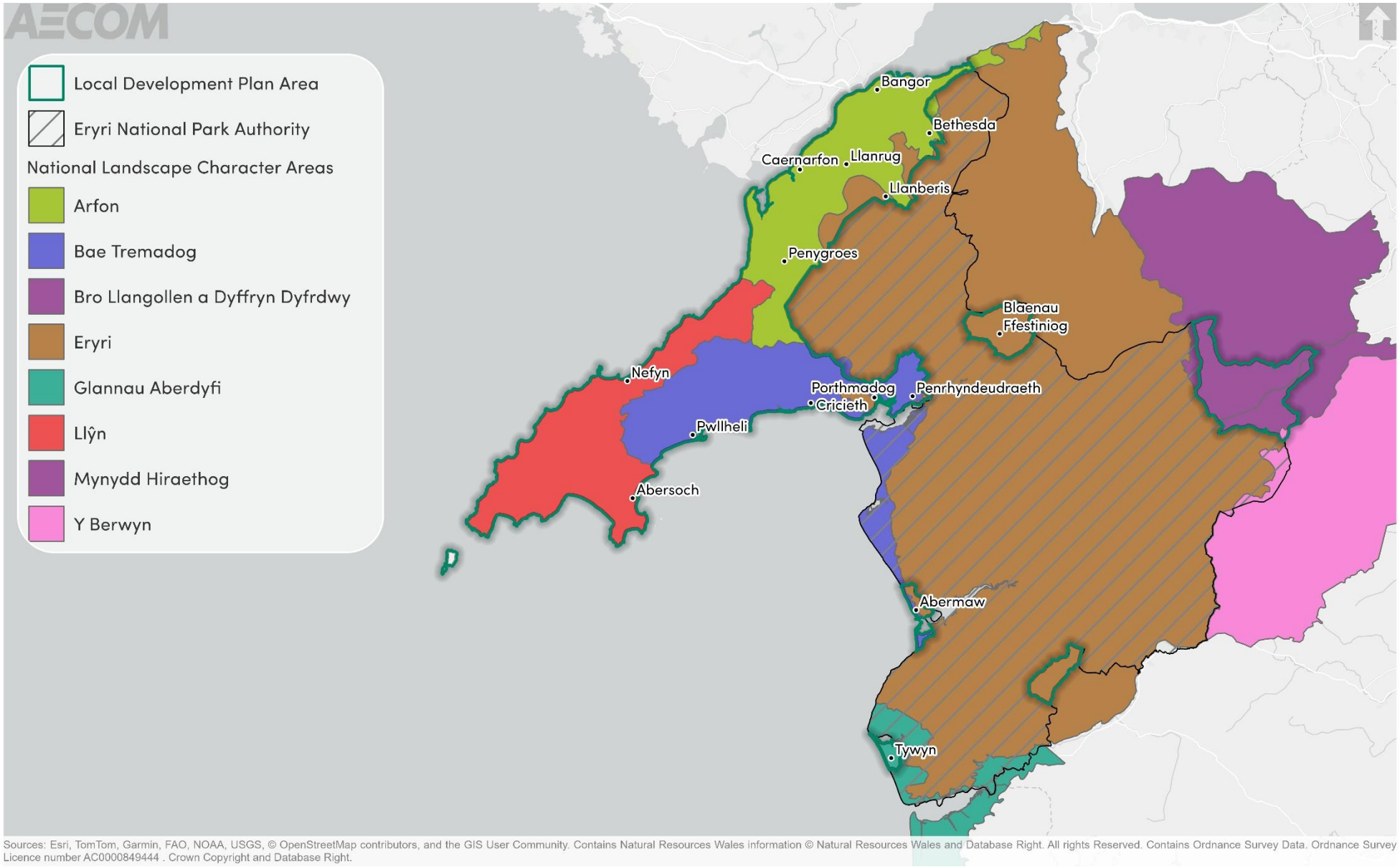


Figure 13-2: National Landscape Character Areas within and in proximity to Gwynedd

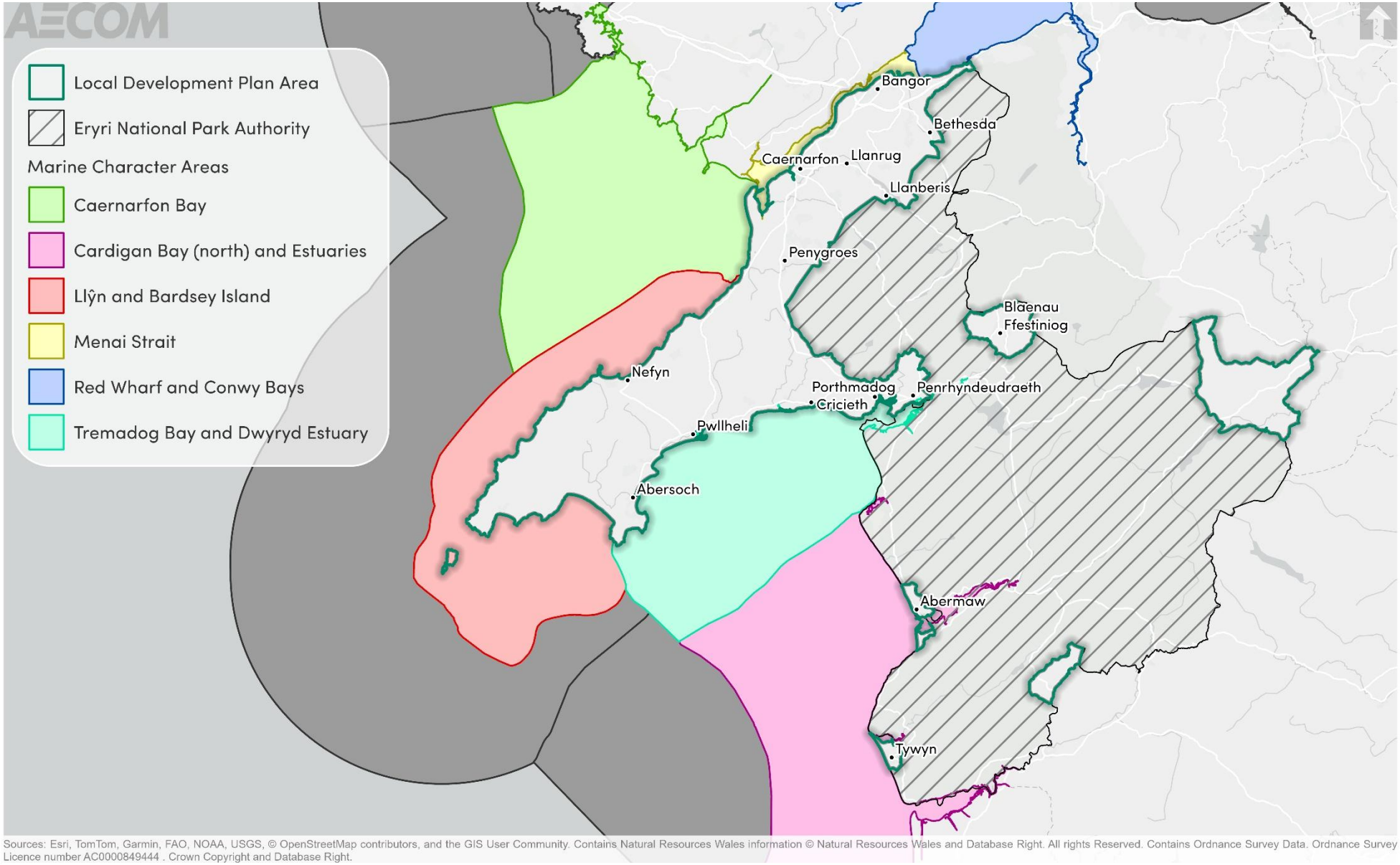


Figure 13-3: Marine Character Areas within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area

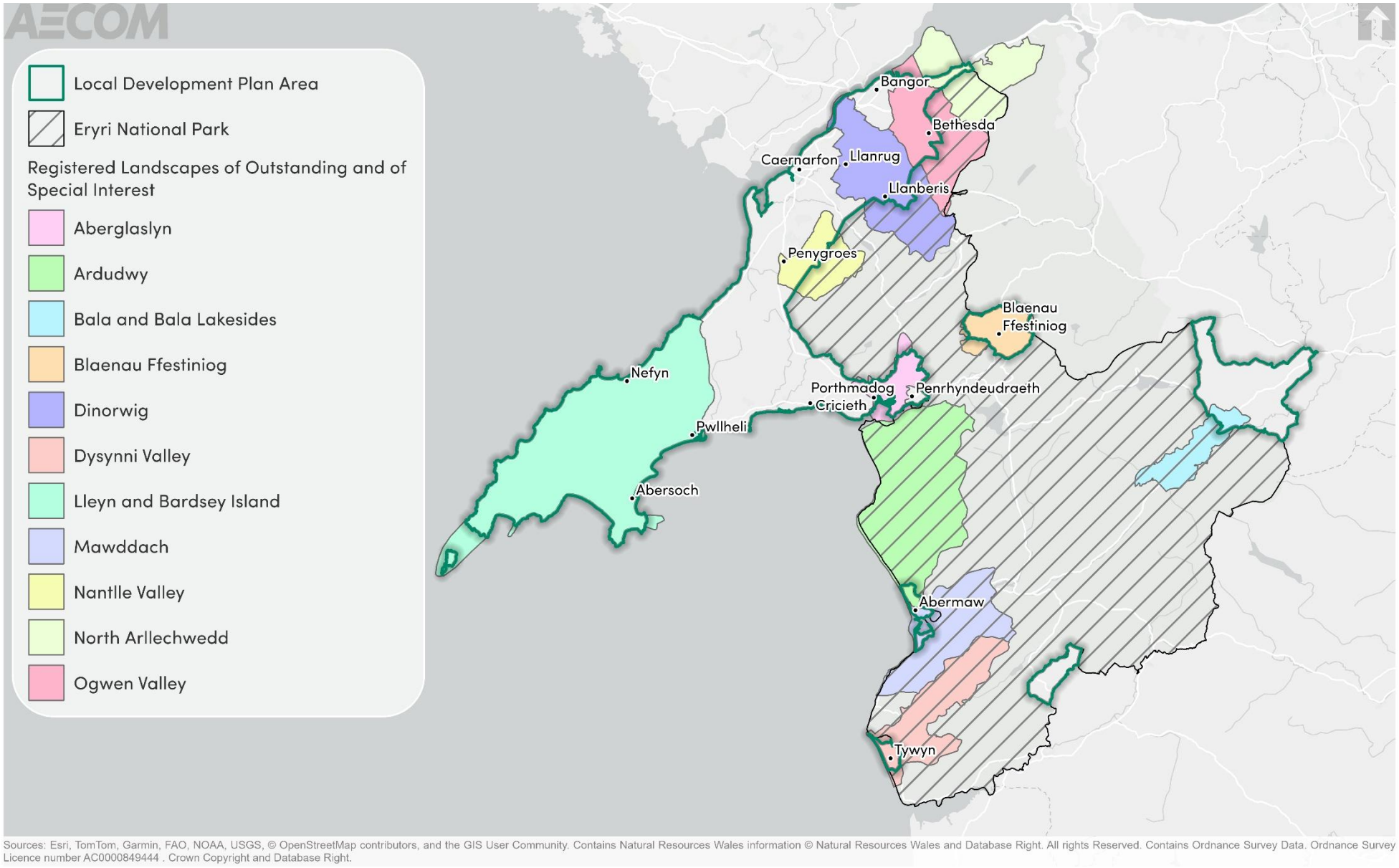


Figure 13-4: Registered Landscapes of Outstanding and of Special Interest within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area

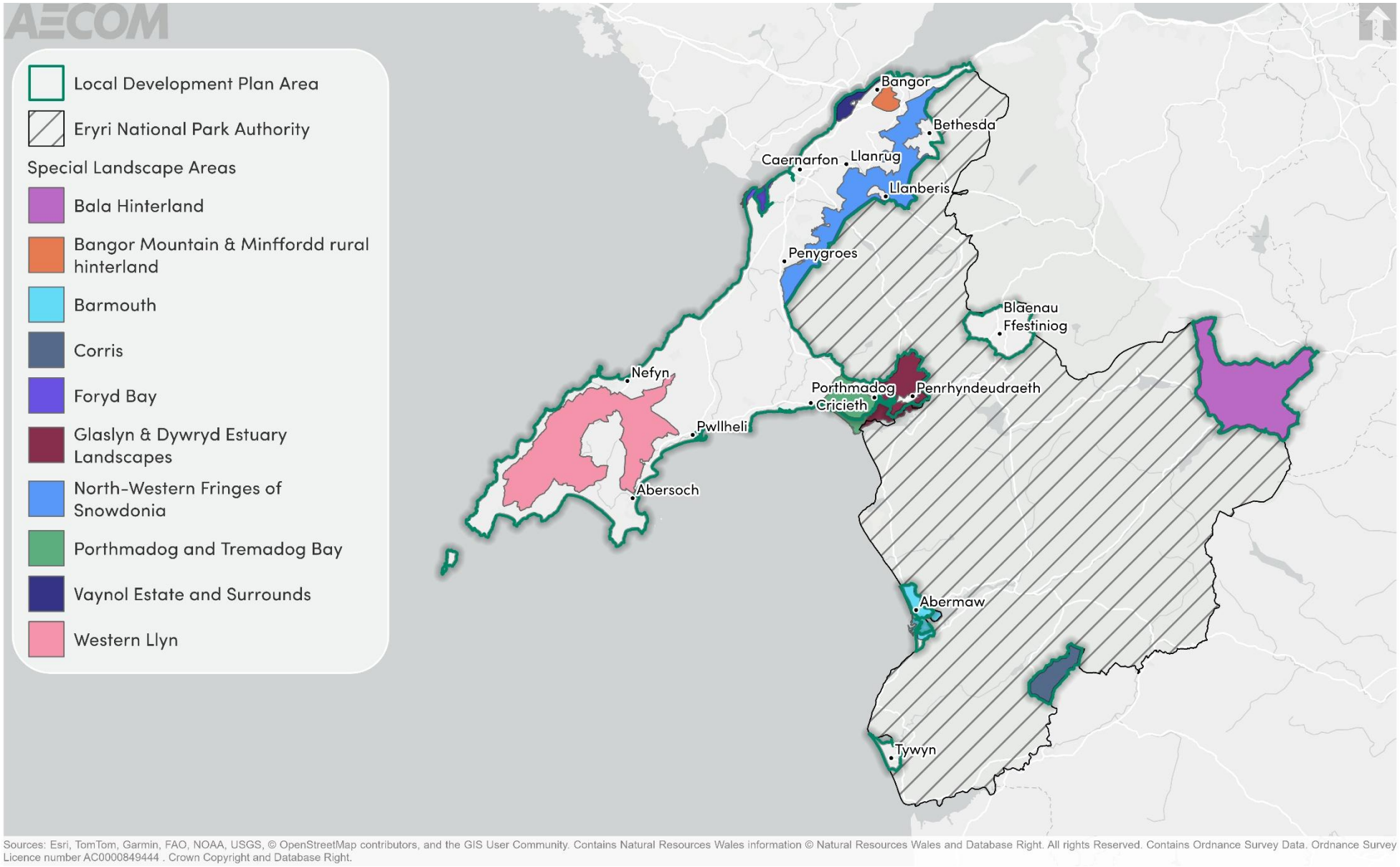


Figure 13-5: Special Landscape Areas within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area

13.4 Future baseline

13.4.1 It is evident that the LDP area has a number of unique and high-quality landscapes within its boundaries, each with their own special characteristics. New development within or in proximity to these areas will need to be carefully considered to ensure reasons for the landscape designations are protected, and potentially enhanced (where possible). This is anticipated to largely depend on development design guidance – for example, development orientation, and the use of suitable materials.

13.4.2 The LDP area also contributes to the setting of the Eryri National Park, and could also contribute to the setting of the potential new Glyndŵr National Park (depending on whether the Development Order is approved by the Welsh Government). It will be important to ensure that new development does not detract from the significance of these landscape designations, but rather contributes towards their special qualities.

13.4.3 Without the LDP, speculative development would continue to come forward with the potential for impacts on the landscape.

13.5 Key issues

13.5.1 The context review and baseline informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- The LDP area has a high quality and varied landscape. The special qualities and character of the LDP area is likely to be important to the community, and is likely to be a large contributor to sense of place. As such, it will be important for the LDP to ensure the long-term protection and enhancement or the various landscape designations.
- If the proposed Glyndŵr National Park is approved, it is likely that the boundary for Gwynedd will change. This could impact upon landscape character and quality for the communities living in a small part of the LDP area, and impact upon the area's importance to landscape setting.
- The SLAs within the LDP area indicate that some areas have high and outstanding visual and sensory sensitivities. The SLAs highlight the difference in landscape character and quality across the LPA area, and are important sources of information to inform how potential development could change the landscape.

13.6 ISA objective

ISA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy/proposal help to:
Protect and enhance the quality and character of the LDP area's landscape, seascape and townscapes.	• Ensure that the LDP area's most valuable landscapes, townscapes and seascapes are conserved and enhanced? • Use new and existing natural landscape features to mitigate any potential effects on nearby and distance interpretations of its landscapes? • Contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the special qualitiesof the Llŷn National Landscape and ensure new developments don't negatively impact on the setting of the National Park.

14. Soil resources and quality

14.1 Introduction to theme

14.1.1 This theme focuses on the quality of soil resources, waste generation, and the extent of mineral resources in the LDP area.

14.2 Policy context

14.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 14-1**.

Table 14-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to soil resources and quality

Document title	Year of publication
Cyngor Gwynedd Waste and Recycling Strategy: 2025-2030	2025
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017

14.3 Baseline summary

Agricultural land

14.3.1 The agricultural land classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (as well as 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality.

14.3.2 As shown in **Figure 14-1**, the best agricultural land in the LDP area is concentrated along the coasts to the north and the west as well as lowland areas, while the interior uplands are predominantly Grade 4, 5 or non-agricultural in nature. Given that many of the more sustainable settlements identified in the existing joint LDP are located within the more agriculturally productive areas, future development directed to these locations is more likely to result in the permanent loss of higher quality agricultural land.

14.3.3 It is worth noting that agricultural land, especially land that utilises farming methods such as conservation tillage, also acts as a carbon sink, storing carbon in the soil through sequestration. When land is disturbed, such as when it is developed for housing, carbon is released into the atmosphere, contributing towards climate change.

Brownfield land

14.3.4 In line with national planning policy, the redevelopment of previously developed (brownfield) land would be expected to be priorities over greenfield sites where it is suitable for development and where its reuse would promote sustainability principles. However, Planning Policy Wales also

recognises that not all brownfield land is suitable for development due to factors such as unsustainable locations, contamination, biodiversity value, industrial heritage interests or potential conflicts with existing land uses.

14.3.5 The Joint LDP highlights that there are low levels of brownfield land in the LDP Area.

Mineral resources

14.3.6 The Joint LDP indicates that Gwynedd and Anglesey have major deposits of almost all main rock types – including slate, limestone, coal, various igneous rocks, and sandstone (including sand and gravel deposits). According to the Regional Technical Statement, in 2010 it was estimated that Gwynedd had sand and gravel reserves of 0.7 million tonnes, which was a landbank of four years. Additionally, in 2010 it was estimated that Gwynedd had 8.51 million tonnes of crushed rock aggregate reserves, which is a landbank of approximately 22.9 years. The sand and gravel reserve landbank does not meet the national requirement of seven years.

14.3.7 Additionally, by comparing the 2010 landbanks in the Regional Technical Statement to the suggested apportionment for future aggregates in the First Review of the North Wales Regional Technical Statement, there is a 3.7 million tonne shortfall for sand and gravel in Gwynedd.[147]

14.3.8 Mineral safeguarding areas and mineral buffer zones are largely concentrated along the boundary with the Eryri National Park, as demonstrated through Figure 14.2.

Waste

14.3.9 The recycling rate in Gwynedd in 2024/25 was 65.3% - this was below the Welsh Government's target of 70%. However, it is recognised that considerable progress has been made towards reducing the amount of waste produced in Gwynedd, with the recycling rate increasing from 55% in 2014/15, and black bag waste declining by approximately 10.9%.

14.3.10 There are five recycling centres within the LDP area, all of which require residents to book a slot to access the sites. These are:[148]

- Caergylchu, Caernarfon.
- Bangor Recycling Centre.
- Blaenau Ffestiniog Recycling Centre.
- Pwllheli Recycling Centre.
- Rhwngddwyryrd Recycling Centre, Garndolbenmaen.

14.3.11 The Gwynedd Waste and Recycling Strategy 2025-2030 indicates that work has been done to oneclosed landfill sites in Gwynedd LPA, located at Llywn Isaf, for the benefit of local ecology.

[147] North Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party, Welsh Government, and South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (2014): 'Regional Technical Statement for the North Wales and South Wales Regional Aggregate Working Parties – First Review' can be accessed here.
[148] Cyngor Gwynedd (2026): 'Recycling Centres' can be accessed here.

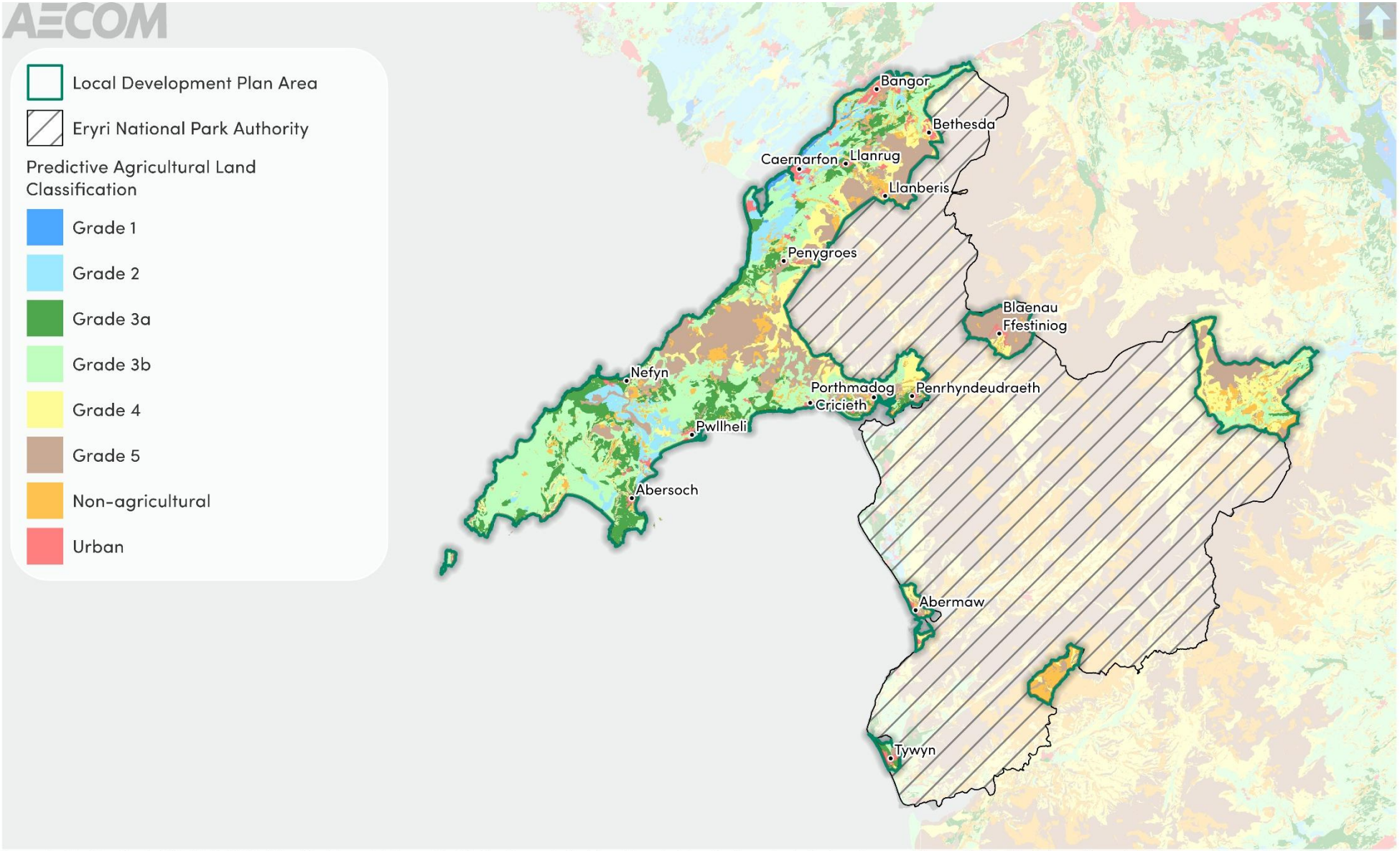
Historic landfill sites and contaminated land

14.3.12 Historic landfill sites (HLS), once used for waste disposal, can create challenges for development due to potential contamination from harmful gases and leachate. Development sites near to HLS must conduct site assessments to check for environmental risks, which may require remediation efforts like soil removal or gas monitoring.

14.3.13 As shown in **Figure 14-3**, HLSs are distributed throughout the LDP area but are generally found in proximity to communities and towns that they serve. The proximity of HLSs to these areas means that future development associated with the LDP could intersect with areas of potential contamination risk, requiring careful ground investigation, risk assessment and management during construction and operation.

14.3.14 Cyngor Gwynedd's Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy identifies former landfill sites, gas works, military sites, garages, engineering works, and historic mining and quarrying sites as the principle sources of contamination within the plan area.[149] Under the strategy, previously contaminated sites addressed through the planning process will be reassessed to ensure all receptors have been considered as part of the site redevelopment

[149] Cyngor Gwynedd (2002) '*Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy*' can be accessed here.



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026.

Figure 14-1: Predictive Agricultural Land Classification within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area

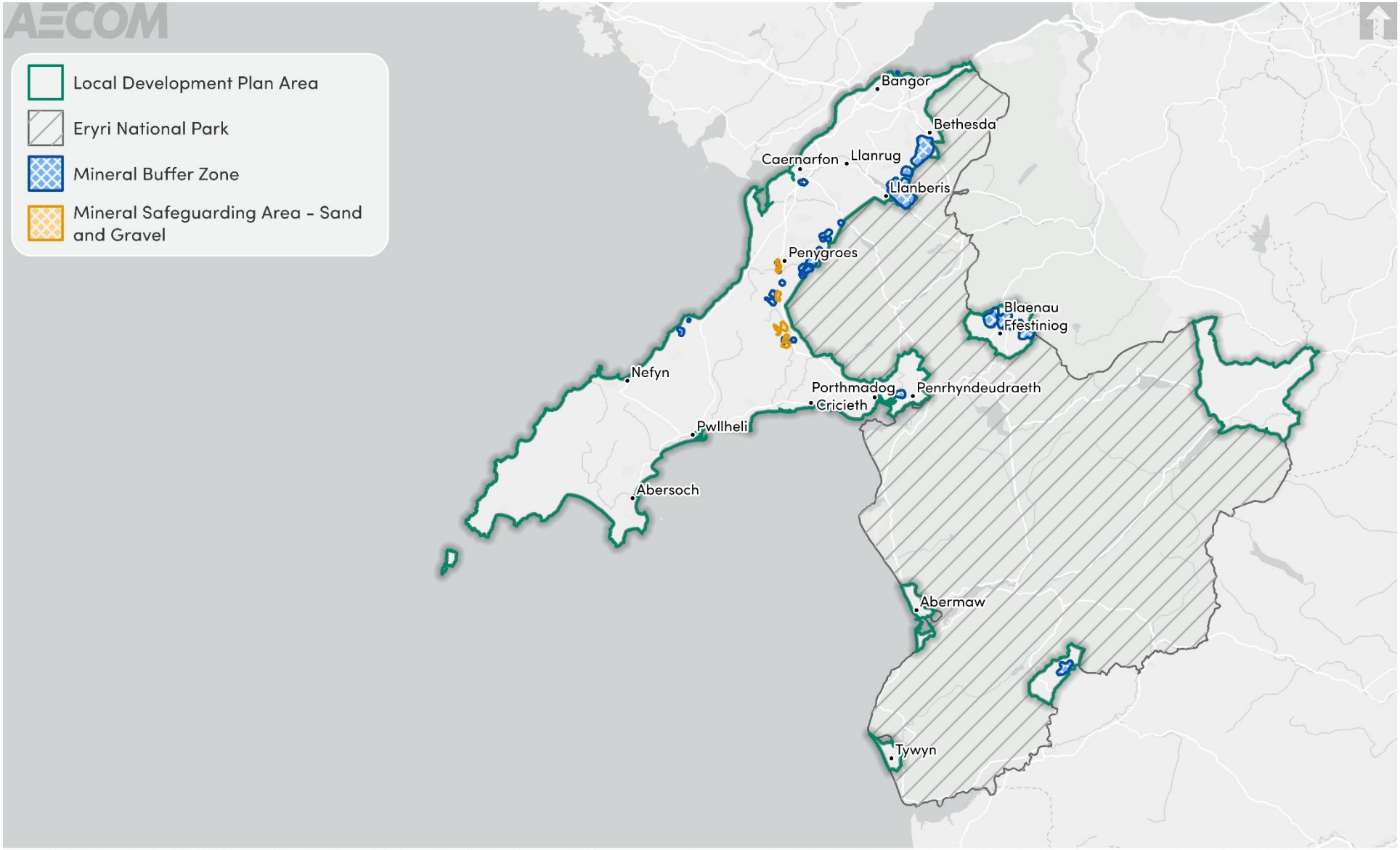


Figure 14-2: Mineral considerations in the LDP area

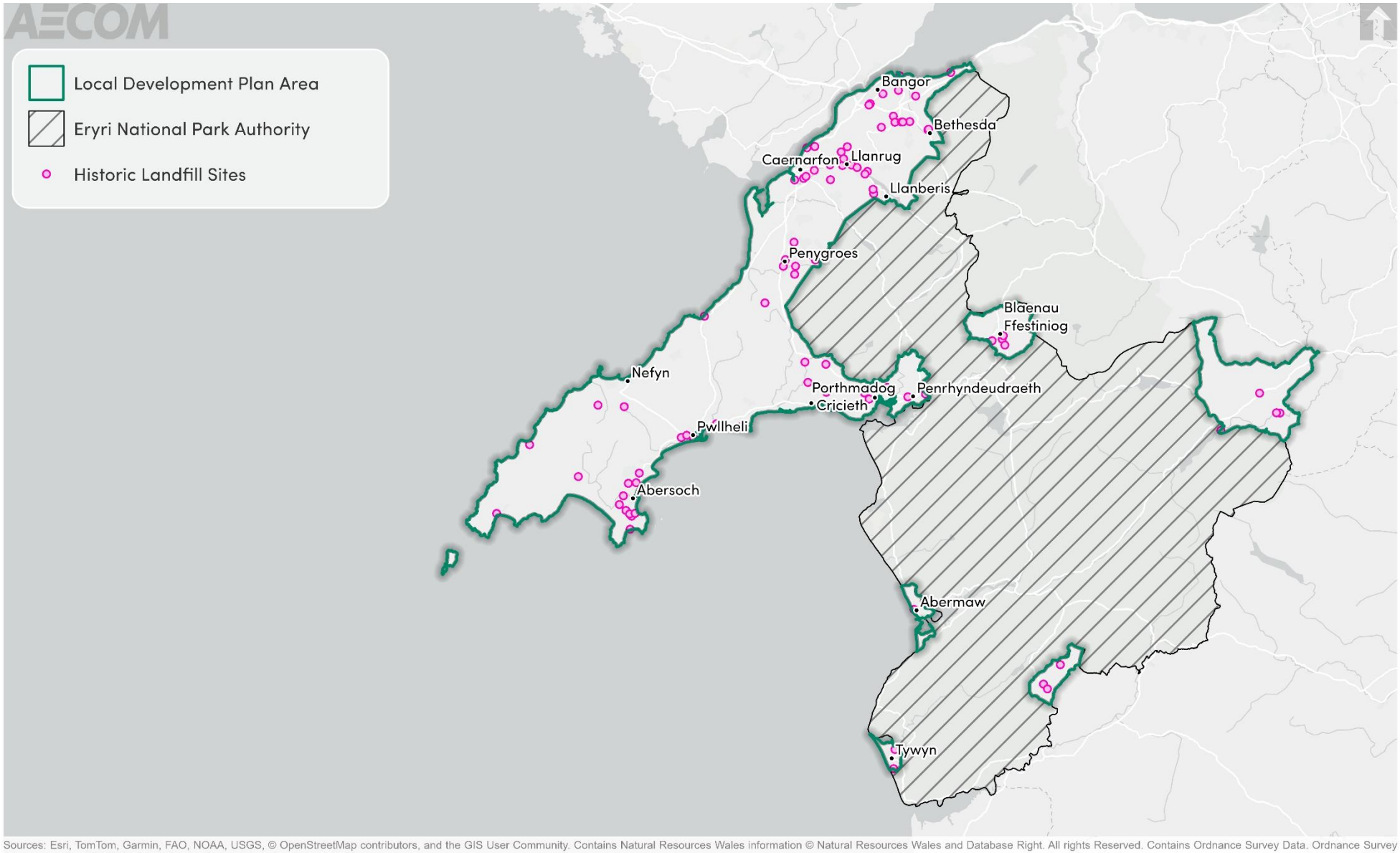


Figure 14-3: Historic Landfill Sites within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area

14.4 Future baseline

14.4.1 Future development has the potential to affect soil resources in the district through the loss of BMV land. Due to the prevalence of BMV land across the plan area it is likely that development outside of urban settlements could lead to the permanent loss of this resource. However, it is recognised that the LDP can strategically plan development to minimise losses including via catchment-scale and partnership approaches to managing land and soil resources.

14.4.2 Rising temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns may lead to more frequent droughts or floods, affecting soil moisture, structure, and agricultural productivity. Soil erosion risks may also increase due to extreme weather, reducing soil fertility and agricultural potential, especially in BMV land.

14.4.3 In the absence of a Local Development Plan, brownfield regeneration would continue to be supported through national policy. However, the LDP would provide greater opportunities to identify appropriate brownfield sites for redevelopment to direct growth strategically and promote the sustainable management of natural resources.

14.4.4 According to the latest data, recycling rates in Gwynedd were lower than the statutory target of 70%. Development through the LDP will likely increase the amount of waste generated in Gwynedd, so it will be important to set out measures to increase recycling rates and reduce waste. This will help to avoid or minimise financial penalties linked to not meeting this target.

14.4.5 Growth in the LDP area could put pressure on mineral resources within and in proximity to the area. This could be through increased extraction, or development over sites with the potential to accommodate important materials.

14.5 Key issues

14.5.1 The context review and baseline informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- Development across the plan area could result in the permanent loss of BMV agricultural land, particularly along the north and west coast and lowland areas. This could impact food production, landscape characteristics and soil quality.
- Redevelopment of brownfield sites offers opportunities to reduce urban sprawl, utilise existing infrastructure, and support regeneration. However, development on these sites may pose contamination risks to groundwater, requiring appropriate site investigations and remediation.
- Historic landfill sites across the district present contamination risks from harmful gases and leachate. Development near these sites may require environmental permits and remediation measures.
- Population growth and urban expansion will increase demand for waste processing infrastructure. Existing facilities must be monitored and potentially expanded to meet future needs, while ensuring that any new facilities do not adversely affect nearby communities or the environment; and

- Climate change may increase the risk of soil erosion, drought, and flooding, affecting soil structure, moisture levels, and agricultural productivity, especially in areas with BMV land.
- Development has the potential to sterilise important materials and minerals, due to being developed over, or extracted for use. It will be important to ensure a balance is created to allow for necessary growth whilst protected these irreplaceable materials.

14.6 ISA objective

14.6.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objective	Assessment questions – will the option/proposal help to:
Make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for greenfield development and protecting, where possible, higher grade agricultural land.	• Minimise the loss of potentially high-grade agricultural land to developments? • Protect and minimise loss of the soil resource and encourage appropriate management to enhance its carbon sequestration and water management functions? • Encourage the use of previously developed land? •
Protect mineral resources and support waste management.	• Address waste by reducing and minimising waste as a priority? • Manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy and in the context of ‘Towards Zero Waste’? • Avoid the sterilisation of mineral resources where possible?

15. Transportation and movement

15.1 Introduction to theme

15.1.1 This theme focuses on transport infrastructure, transport usage, traffic flows and congestion, and accessibility levels in Gwynedd.

15.2 Policy context

15.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 15-1**.

Table 15-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation and movement

Document title	Year of publication
North Wales Regional Transport Plan	2025
The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan	2023
Gwynedd Well-Being Assessment	2022
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017

15.3 Baseline summary

Strategic context

15.3.1 Gwynedd is a coastal county located in the north west of Wales. As illustrated in **Figure 15-1** the authority is well connected by road, with the strategic road network providing links to North Wales and beyond. There is no motorway servicing the north Wales region, although the A55 and the North Wales coastal railway line connects the plan area to North Wales and beyond.

15.3.2 The A55 has significant congestion peaks related to holiday traffic in July and August which contributes to air and noise pollution in the region. Soon after the A55 reaches Gwynedd it splits into the A5, which heads towards Eryri National Park before joining the A470 which provides Blaenau Ffestiniog with road connectivity. To the west, the A487 splits from the A55 and heads south towards Porthmadog. Other important routes in the area include the A497, A496 and the A499.

15.3.3 Gwynedd's local travel strategy operates under the North Wales Regional Transport Plan 2025-2030, managed regionally via Ambition North Wales and Cyngor Gwynedd[150]. The existing Joint LDP supports any development that maximises accessibility, but particularly by foot, cycle and public

[150] North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (2025) '*North Wales Regional Transport Plan*'. Can be accessed here.

transport. Furthermore, The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-2028 seeks to improve and expand the existing walking and cycling infrastructure within the County. Both of these plans are in conformity with The North Wales Regional Transport Plan, which seeks to maximise the uptake of transport that isn't private vehicle use.

15.3.4 The northeast of Gwynedd overlaps with the North Wales Metro. The North Wales Metro is a multi-modal public transport improvement programme in north Wales aimed at tackling the limited public transport frequency and accessibility and high car dependency in the region.

15.3.5 The Department of Transport (DoT) has developed the connectivity metric, which measures an individual's ability to reach employment, services and social engagements using various modes of transport, including walking, cycling, driving and public transport. More information about the tool can be found here. A higher Transport Connectivity Metric score means better connectivity — i.e. a greater ability for people in that location to reach jobs, services and social opportunities by various transport modes.

15.3.6 **Figure 15-2** shows the overall transport connectivity in Gwynedd by LSOA using the DOTs connectivity metric. The highest levels of connectivity can be seen in and within proximity to urban centres. Connectivity generally decreases as distance from urban centre increases within Gwynedd.

Sustainable transport

15.3.7 **Figure 15-3** shows sustainable transport routes within Gwynedd, which are discussed further below.

Rail

15.3.8 As shown in **Figure 15-3,** there are 36 railway stations in the LDP area, connecting residents with key centres within Gwynedd and the wider region. Transport for Wales and Avanti West Coast are the primary train companies servicing North West Wales. The rail stations are widespread throughout the authority with a number concentrated around Bangor. Bangor was also the most used train station in North Wales with nearly 700,000 station entries and exits a year.[151]

15.3.9 Both the Cambrian Coast and Conwy Valley railway lines play an important role in supporting residents access to services, employment and tourism, but are often constrained by service frequency and accessibility. The North Wales Regional Transport Plan highlights the opportunities for better integration between rail, bus and active travel links in the region to help enhance connectivity.

Bus

15.3.10 **Figure 15-3** shows the bus routes present throughout the LDP area. While these appear to be widespread, it is also clear that these are focussed on the main settlements. There are, however, limited bus service provision in the rural areas.

15.3.11 While bus services play an important role in providing local and short-distance journeys, many routes across North Wales operate at infrequent

[151] North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (2025) 'North Wales Regional Transport Plan' can be accessed here.

intervals, reducing their viability compared to car travel.[152] Coach fares in the region are typically one-third the price of rail, highlighting the potential role of a well-developed coach network in improving affordability and reducing transport-related inequality. However, there are currently no coach services operating along the A55 corridor, limiting connectivity for longer-distance journeys. In addition, the absence of bus priority infrastructure within the LDP area reduces the competitiveness of bus and coach travel when compared with private car use.

Walking and cycling

15.3.12 Walking and cycling are sustainable and practical alternatives to the private car, supporting healthy lifestyles and reducing the impact on the environment.

15.3.13 National Cycle Network (NCN) Routes 8, 5, 61 and 82 extend throughout Gwynedd. Route 5 travels in sections from Reading to Bangor, Route 8 measures over 400km in length and connects Holyhead to Cardiff. Route 61 connects Caernarfon to Waunfawr and Route 82 runs from Bangor to Tregrath and forms part of the Lon Las Ogwen route.

15.3.14 The LDP area has a vast PRoW network, connecting settlements and providing opportunities to travel sustainably for localised journeys. The Wales Coastal Path is important in this respect, following the coastline of the LDP area and beyond. The path provides opportunities for walking / cycling along 180km of the coastline.

15.3.15 With regards to ongoing projects, ‘Active Travel schemes’ have been delivered throughout Gwynedd to improve opportunities for walking or cycling in several areas. Work is also progressing on the development of the Ffordd Penrhos which aims to improve cycling and walking facilities in the outskirts of the city of Bangor. The council has also recently secured funding to improve walking and cycling infrastructure near Ysgol Treferthyr, Cricieth and Ysgol Rhostryfan, and work is expected to begin shortly.

Travel to work

15.3.16 Detailed commuting patterns provide an insight into where residents of Gwynedd travel to work and where those who travel to Gwynedd for work live.

15.3.17 In 2024, data indicates that 11,200 people commute into Gwynedd for work, while around 7,300 residents commute out of the area, suggesting a net inflow of workers. The majority of employment is locally based, with 51,300 people living and working within the County. In total, there are 62,500 people working in the area, compared to 58,500 working residents, suggesting Gwynedd plays a role as an employment destination for neighbouring authorities.[153]

15.3.18 Census data from 2021 shows that 51,820 usual residents were working within Gwynedd. **Table 15-2** below shows that the majority of residents commute using a car or a van. Home working also accounts for a significant proportion of employment, with 12,259 people working from home. Active

[152] Ibid.
[153] StatsWales (2024) ‘Commuting patterns by Welsh local authority and measure’, [online]. Available here.

travel plays a role in commuter flows for Gwynedd, with rail travel being the least popular commuting method.

Table 15-2: Travel to work method in Gwynedd (2021) [154]

Travel to work	Count	Percent (%)
Work mainly at or from home	12,259	23.7
Underground, metro, light rail, tram	24	0.0
Train	198	0.4
Bus, minibus or coach	1,266	2.4
Taxi	125	0.2
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	135	0.3
Driving a car or van	29,336	56.6
Passenger in a car or van	2,268	4.4
Bicycle	532	1.0
On foot	5,292	10.2
Other method of travel to work	385	0.7

[154] Nomis (2021) 'Gwynedd Local Authority', [online]. Available here.

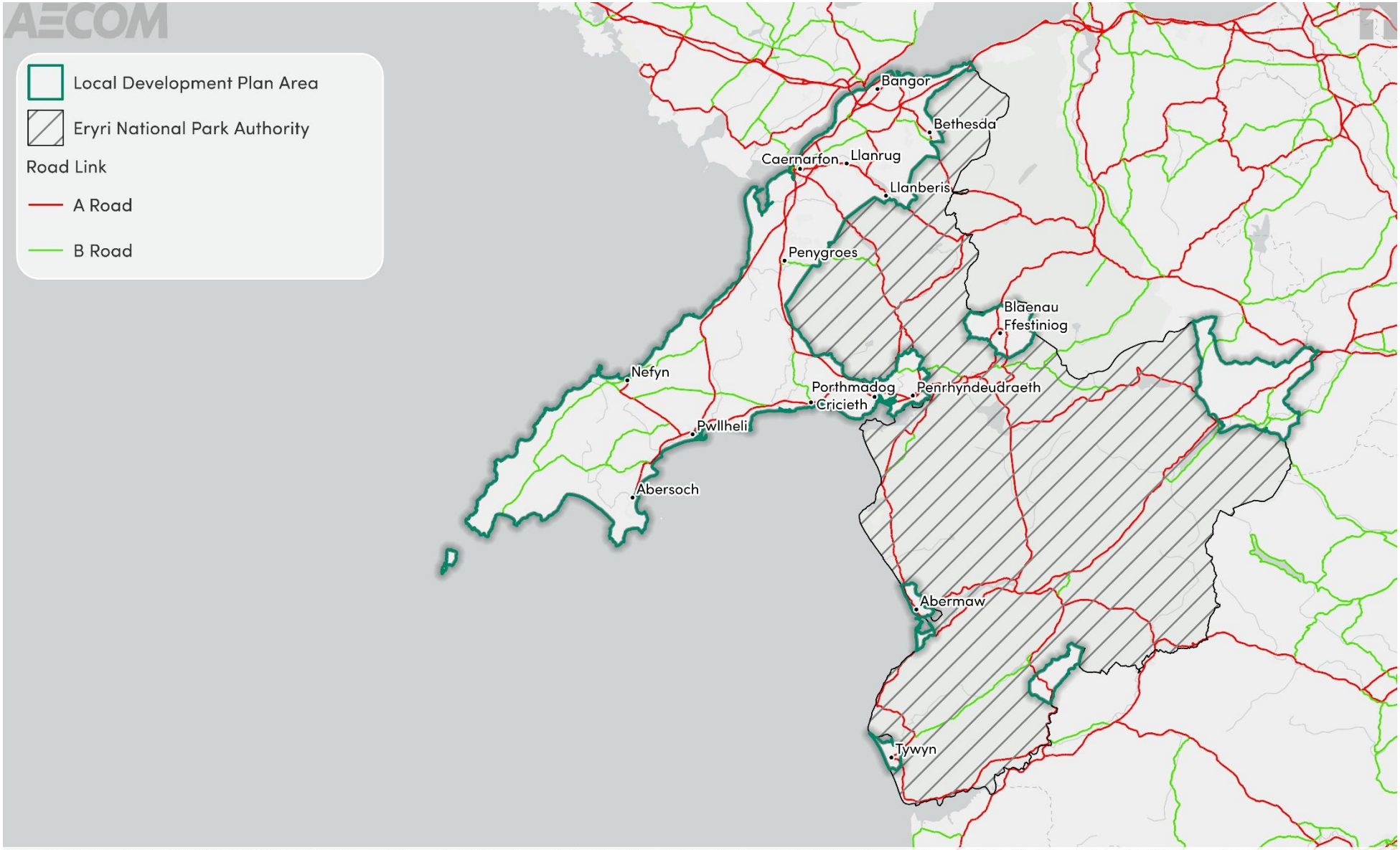


Figure 15-1: Road network within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP Area

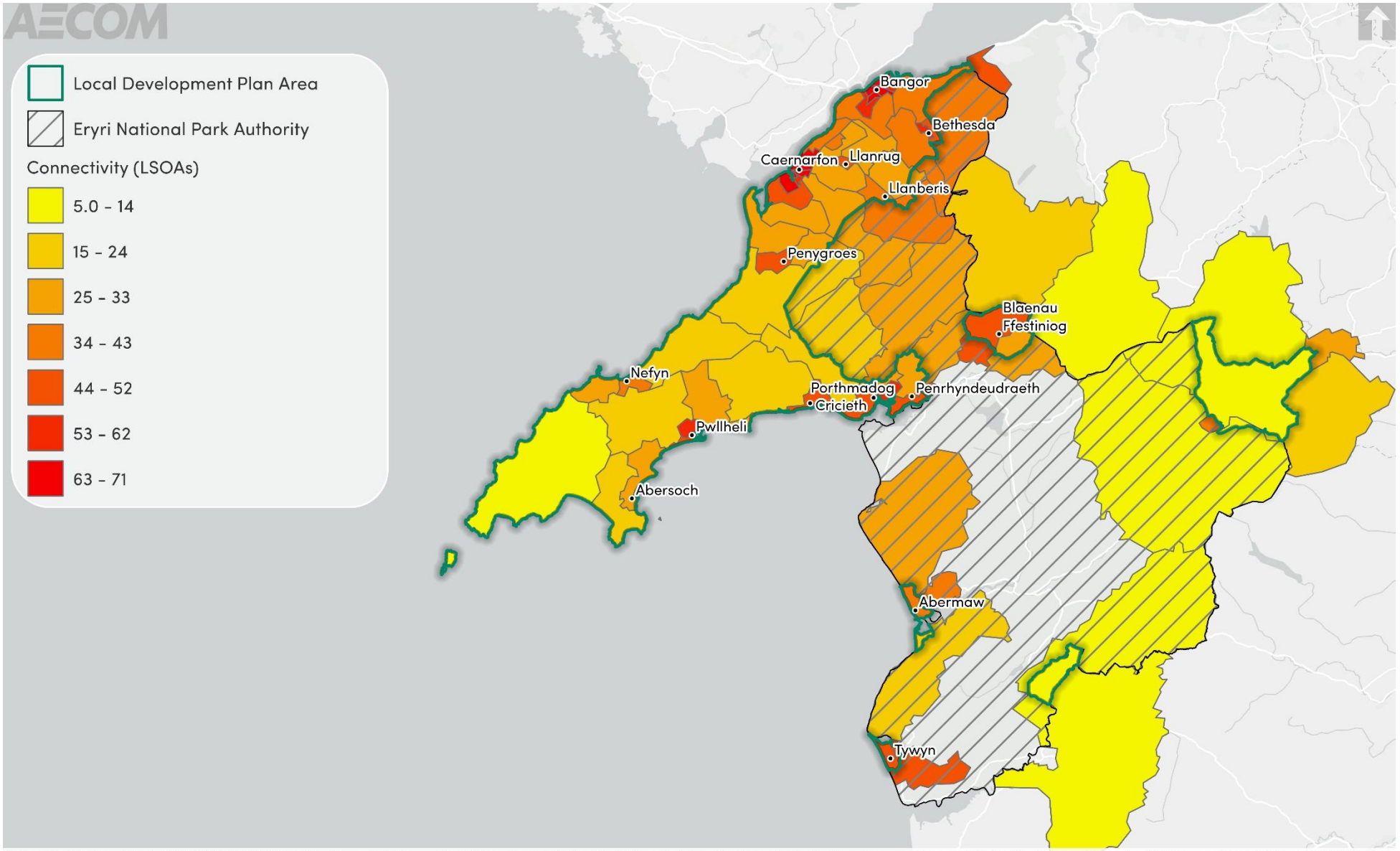


Figure 15-2: Overall transport connectivity in Gwynedd

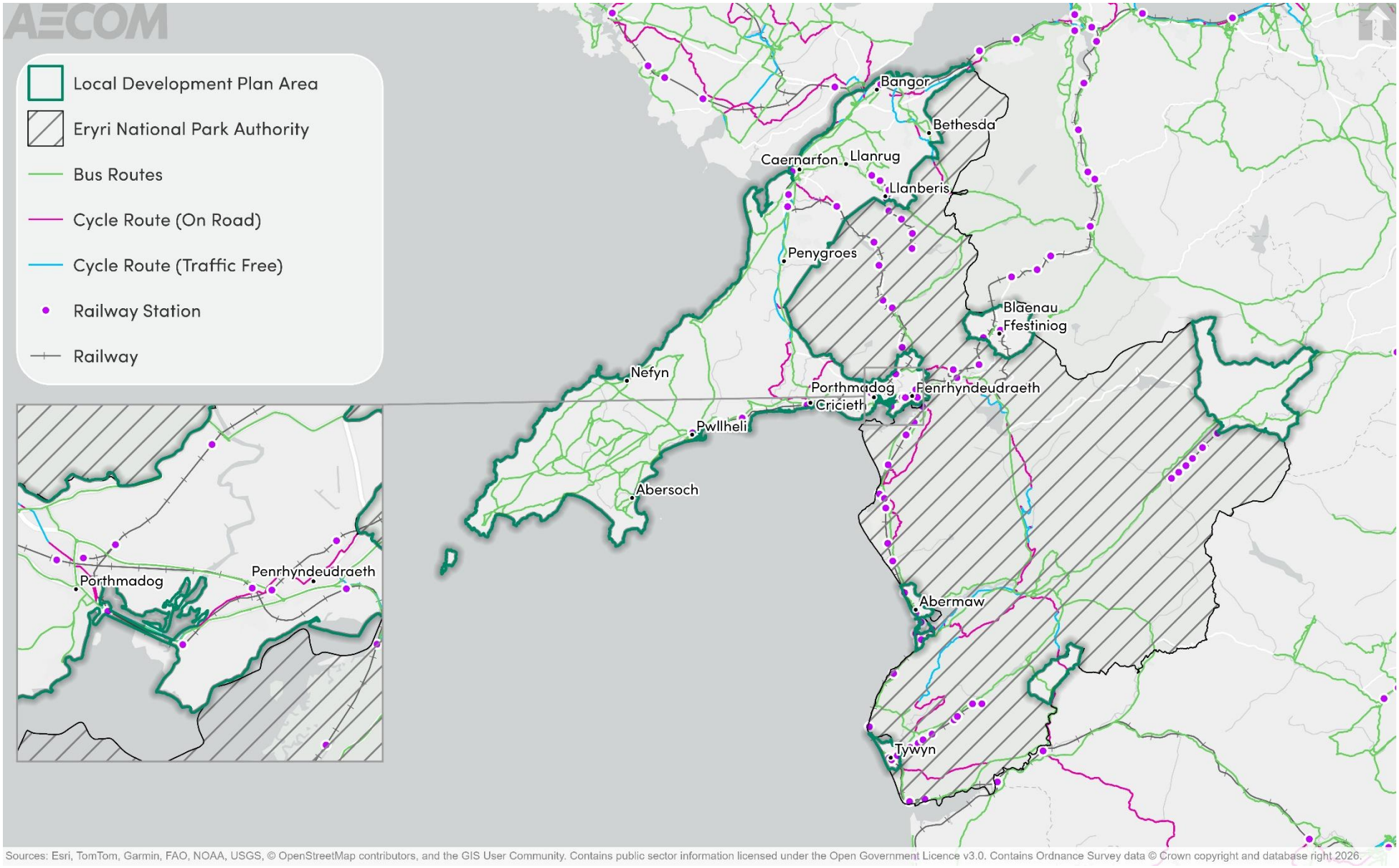


Figure 15-3: Active transport and public transport network within and in proximity to Gwynedd

15.4 Future baseline

15.4.1 The North Wales Metro, delivered through the Network North Wales programme, aims to improve rail and bus connectivity across the region and beyond. However, early investment is concentrated in north-east Wales, and any benefits to the LDP area are likely to be indirect, mainly through improved services on the North Wales Main Line via Bangor. No dedicated Metro funding for Gwynedd has been identified at this time.

15.4.2 Cyngor Gwynedd have been delivering active travel schemes to encourage a greater uptake in walking and cycling. It is anticipated that further emphasis will be placed on active travel in accordance with the Active Travel (Wales) Act. The Welsh Government's commitment to encouraging home and distance working will benefit strategic road infrastructure and reduce the effects of congestion, especially during peak commuting times.

15.4.3 It is likely that an increase in development in the LDP area will impact upon commuting patterns by potentially increasing employment opportunities and making the area a more attractive place to work. This could result in an increase in road users in the LDP area.

15.4.4 Climate change will impact the LDP area's transport network, with extreme weather increasing risks like flooding, road damage, and public transport disruptions. Heavy rainfall may waterlog roads, whilst increases in temperature could degrade surfaces and affect rail reliability, potentially leading to greater car dependency, congestion, and emissions. To mitigate these risks, future transport planning must integrate climate resilience measures and promote sustainable travel options.

15.5 Key issues

15.5.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- Access and frequency of sustainable transport is varied across the LDP area, with more rural parts of the county experiencing lower service levels.
- The North Wales Metro includes part of the north east Gwynedd. The project is anticipated to increase connectivity to locations including London and Merseyside.
- An increase in development in the LDP area is likely to increase traffic related issues, given that the majority of the population rely on driving private vehicles to access key services (including employment). This reflects the limited sustainable transportation provision in the more rural parts of the LDP area. An increase in vehicles on the road network could cause new or exacerbate existing issues, such as congestion experienced on the A55.
- New development through the LDP could allow for opportunities for continued active travel support, reflecting work undertaken in the LDP area through the active travel schemes.

15.6 ISA objectives

15.6.1 Considering the key issues discussed above, it is proposed that the ISA should include the following objective and assessment questions:

ISA objective	Assessment questions – will the policy/proposal help to:
Increase sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel?	• Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development? • Provide opportunities to improve frequency and availability of public transport services particularly for rural communities? • Encourage modal shift to more sustainable and active forms of travel, such as walking and cycling and use of public transport? • Prioritise sustainable transport options over car use where possible, including provision of adequate cycle parking and storage options? • Enable transport infrastructure improvements? • Deliver and where necessary improve active travel networks? • Facilitate working from home and remote working? • Provide improvements to and / or reduce congestion on the existing highway network? • Contribute to green infrastructure networks?

16. Water resources and quality

16.1 Introduction to theme

16.1.1 This theme focuses on the local water supply, water resources and their quality within the LDP area.

16.2 Policy context

16.2.1 International and national plans, policies and strategies related to this theme are in **Appendix B**. Regional and local plans, policies and strategies that have informed the evidence base have been included in **Table 15-1**.

Table 16-1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to transportation and movement

Document title	Year of publication
Eryri National Park Partnership Plan	2020
Western Wales River Basin Management Plan (RBMP)	2021
Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan	2017

16.3 Baseline summary

Water resources

16.3.1 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is responsible for managing water resources in Wales.

16.3.2 One of the ways that this is done is through licensing water abstraction within catchment areas. NRW developed Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) to:

- inform the public on water resources and licensing practice.
- provide a consistent approach to local water resources management; and
- help to balance the needs of water-users and the environment.

16.3.3 As shown in **Figure 16-1**, three water catchment areas cover the LDP area with most of the area lying within the Llyn & Eryri CAMS area. A smaller area to the south and south east lies within the Meirionnydd CAMS area and the Dee CAMS area respectively.

16.3.4 The Llyn & Eryri and Meirionnydd CAMS areas generally have good river water availability, in contrast to the Dee CAMS area which has no river water available for abstraction across its entire extent. It is important to note that these CAMS were last updated in 2015 and so these areas may have experienced changes in water availability since then.

16.3.5 The LDP area lies primarily within the Western Wales River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). A smaller area to the south east sites within the Dee RBMP. In terms of water quality, **Figure 16-2** illustrates waterbody ecological water quality within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area. Overall, Gwynedd water quality is generally good or moderate. There are no waterbodies classified as being of poor or bad ecological status within the authority.

16.3.6 **Figure 16-3**: WFD River Waterbodies – Chemical Water Quality within and in proximity to the LDP area illustrates waterbody chemical water quality within and in proximity to the Gwynedd LDP area. The chemical status of waterbodies in the LPD area is generally poor. In some cases, such as the Afon Gwyrfai, high concentrations of phosphates are affecting the rate of development.

Bathing waters

16.3.7 Bathing water quality in Wales has improved significantly over the past two decades. There are 112 designated bathing waters across Wales; eleven of which are within Gwynedd. Table 16-2 below shows that all bathing waters have passed the EC Bathing Waters classification since 2022 (noting that Porth Nefyn was designated in 2024). It also indicates that only quality in Abersoch and Criccieth has varied.

16.3.8 **Figure 16-4** shows the location of designated bathing waters within or in proximity to Gwynedd. The figure also shows areas affecting bathing waters within Gwynedd. This dataset comprises of polygons relating to each site identified under the Bathing Water Directive (76/160/EEC).

16.3.9 In Wales, Natural Resources Wales is responsible for monitoring bathing waters.

Table 16-2: Annual bathing water quality assessments

Bathing water	2022	2023	2024	2025
Aberdaron	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Abersoch	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent
Craig Du Beach Central	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Criccieth	Sufficient	Sufficient	Good	Good
Glan Don Beach	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Llyn Padarn	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Morfa Dinlle	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Morfa Nefyn	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Bathing water	2022	2023	2024	2025
Porth Nefyn	No classification	No classification	Good	Good
Porth Neigwl	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Pwllheli	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

16.3.10 The beaches and the coastal waters beyond are under pressure from a combination of diffuse rural pressures and urban pollution from sewage / misconnections in the developed areas. The top five sources of pollution are:[155]

- Pollution from sewage – bacteria from sewage can enter our waters because of system failures or overflows or directly from sewage works.
- Water draining from farms and farmland – manure from livestock or poorly stored slurry can wash into rivers and streams resulting in faecal material entering the sea.
- Animals and birds on or near beaches - dog, bird and other animal faeces can affect bathing water as they often contain high levels of bacteria (much higher than treated human waste).
- Water draining from populated areas - water draining from urban areas following heavy rain can contain pollution from a variety of sources, including animal and bird faeces.
- Domestic sewage – misconnected drains and poorly located and maintained septic tanks can pollute surface water systems.

[155] Natural Resources Wales (2025): 'Bathing Water Quality' can be accessed here.

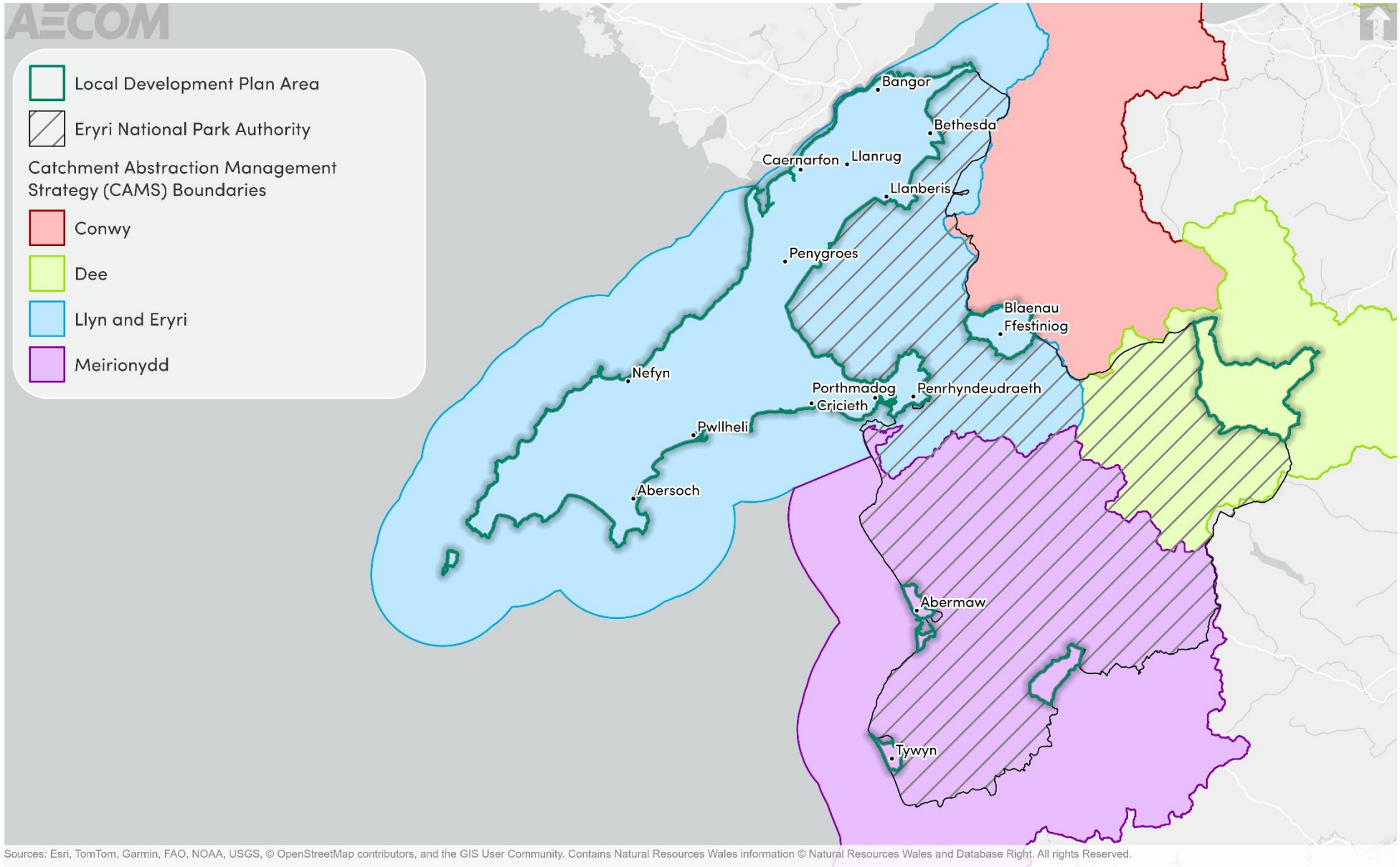


Figure 16-1: Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS) boundaries within and in proximity to Gwynedd

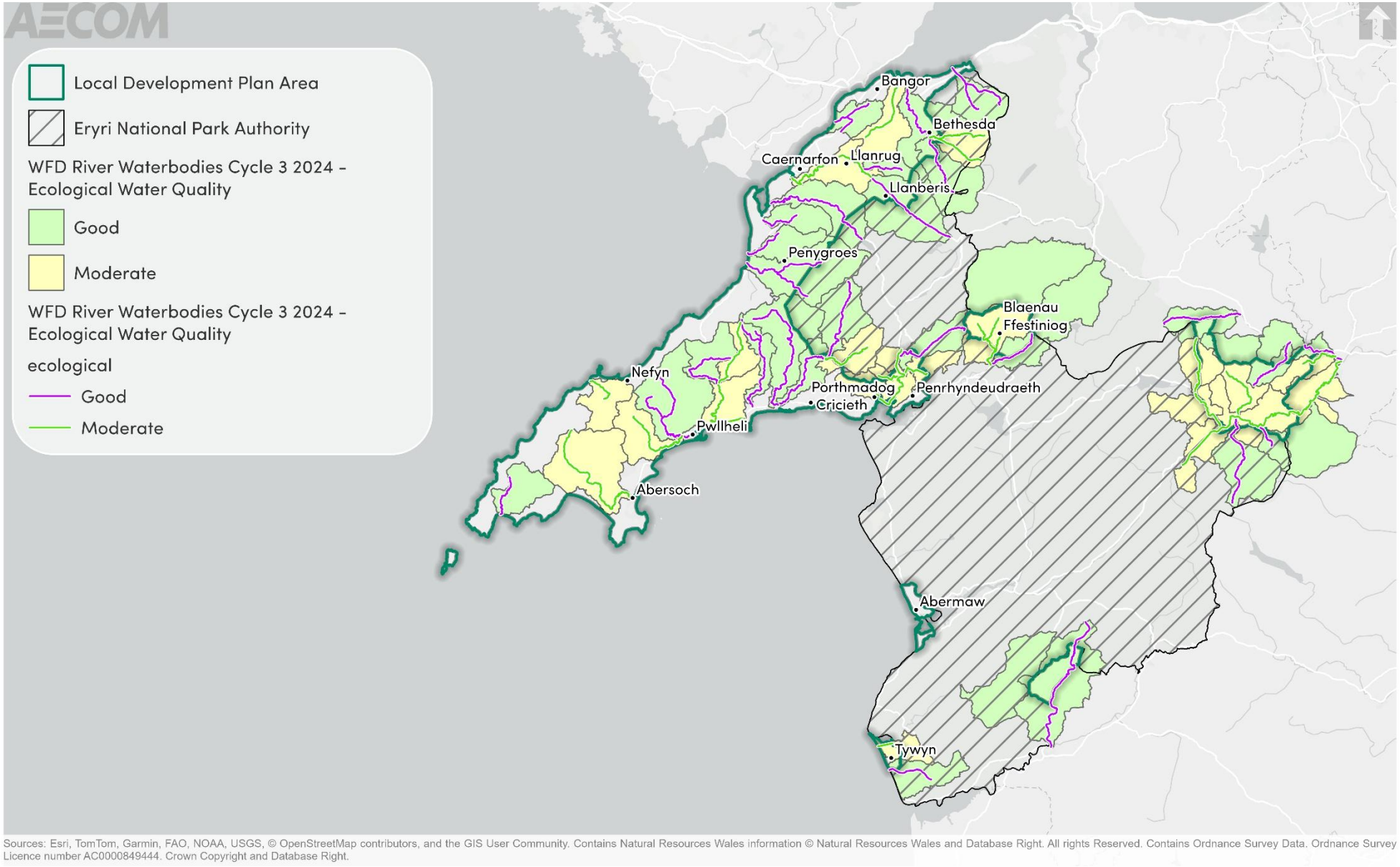


Figure 16-2: WFD River Waterbodies – Ecological Water Quality within and in proximity to the LDP area

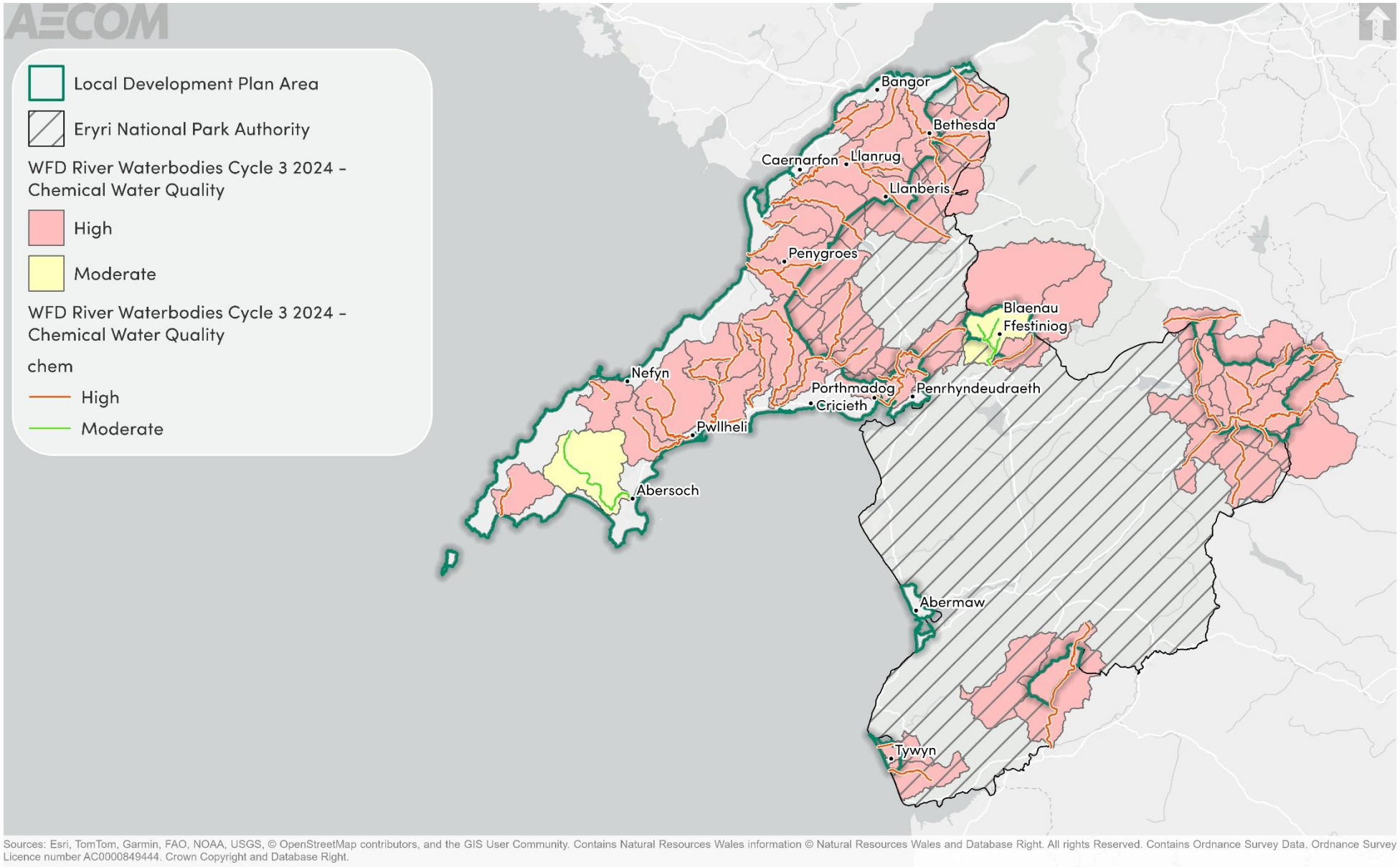


Figure 16-3: WFD River Waterbodies – Chemical Water Quality within and in proximity to the LDP area

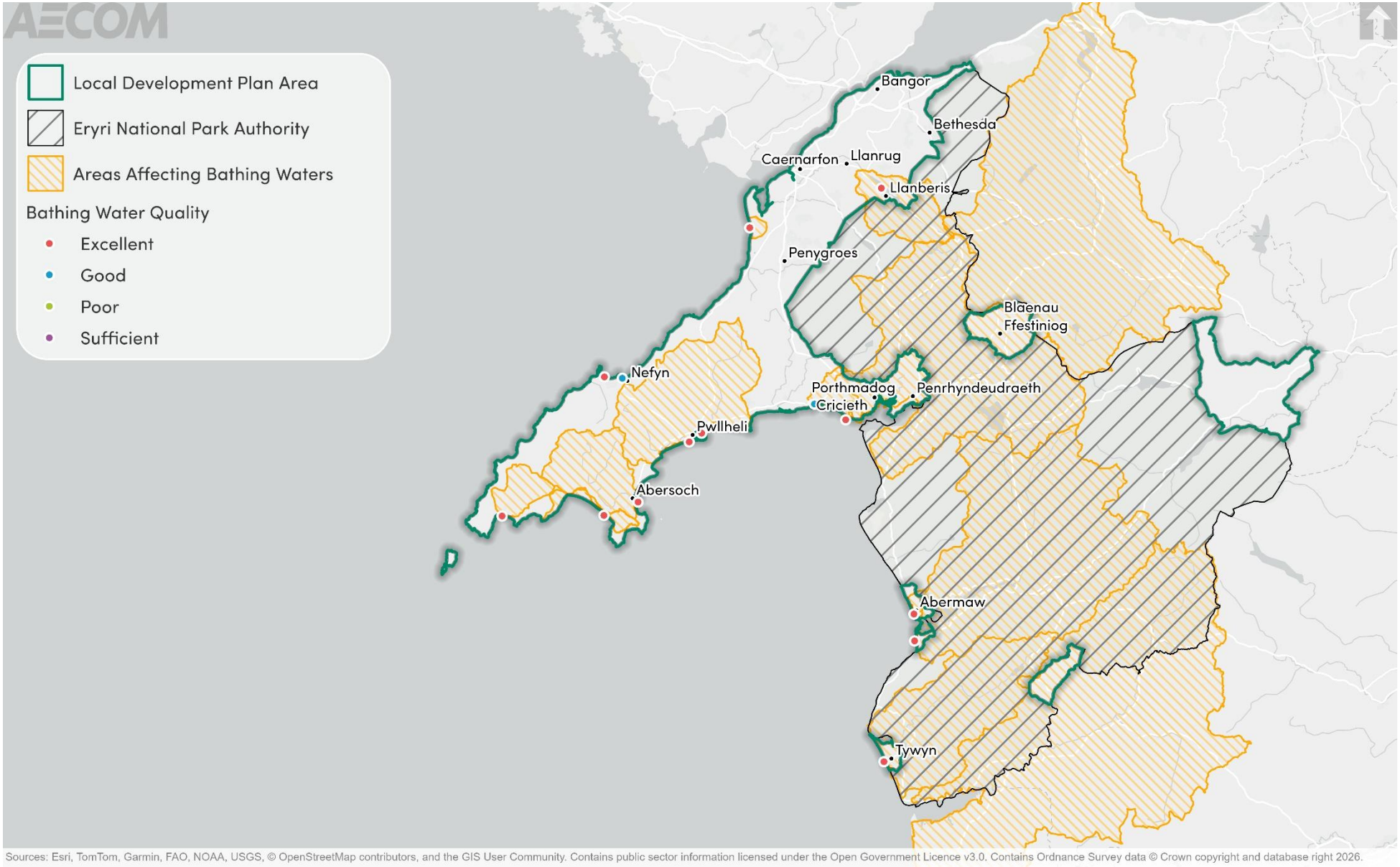


Figure 16-4: Areas affecting bathing water quality and bathing water quality within and in proximity to Gwynedd

16.4 Future baseline

16.4.1 Climate change is expected to have significant implications for water resources in Gwynedd, exacerbating existing pressures on both water availability and quality. Rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns could lead to more frequent droughts, reducing river flows and increasing competition for already scarce water supplies in the area. More intense rainfall events may heighten the risk of pollution in local watercourses.

16.4.2 Future development also has the potential to affect water quality through increased consumption, diffuse pollution, waste-water discharges, water run-off, and modification. Relevant RBMP and CAMS will remain in place in the absence of the LDP. However, the LDP will provide an opportunity to strategically support the actions outlined in the RBMPs and CAMSs. The requirements of the WFD are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within Gwynedd. However, in the absence of the LDP, development is less likely to support opportunities to enhance water quality.

16.5 Key issues

16.5.1 The context review and baseline information informed the identification of several key issues (problems and opportunities):

- Water quality in Gwynedd is generally good, with the majority of bathing waters achieving a quality rating of excellent.
- It is recognised that policy approaches are pushing towards a holistic and sustainable approach to the management, protection and use of natural resources, including through targeted measures to improve environmental outcomes relating to water in order to maximise beneficial outcomes to social, environmental and economic factors.
- Policy reinforces the need to consider the interrelationship between planned developments and the factors mentioned above, with emphasis being placed on the likely effects of climate change, the need for efficient uses of water and conserving the natural environment.

16.6 ISA objectives

ISA objective	Assessment questions – will the option/proposal help to:
Conserve, protect and enhance the water environment, water quality and water resources.	• Reduce water consumption? • Ensure an adequate supply of water can be provided to sustain the development considering current and future projections of water availability and water use? • Maintain or improve water quality in the LDP area? • Reduce the potential for contamination of waterbodies and courses? • Reduce the potential for agricultural practices to contribute towards nitrate-based pollution of waterbodies and courses?

17. Next steps

17.1 Subsequent stages for the ISA process

17.1.1 Scoping is the first stage in the ISA process. The next stage will involve the development and assessment of reasonable alternatives, which includes exploring candidate sites and strategic options for the overall level and distribution of growth. An Interim ISA Report will then be prepared for consultation alongside the Pre-Deposit Plan.

17.2 Consultation on this Scoping Report

17.2.1 At this scoping stage, the SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies. The statutory consultation bodies are Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Cadw. The consultation will be further extended to key stakeholders as determined by the Council.

17.2.2 The scoping report public consultation will run for65 weeks from 25 November 2026 to 7 January 2027.

17.2.3 Scoping responses should be returned to:

planningpolicy@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Planning Policy
Cyngor Gwynedd
Shirehall Street
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Appendix A - ISA framework

This appendix pulls together the themes and objectives that will be a focus for the assessment into one table – the ISA framework.

Table A1: ISA framework

ISA theme	ISA objective
Accessibility	Improve accessibility to essential services and facilities across Gwynedd
Air quality and noise	Identify and pursue any opportunities to reduce, or at least, minimise population exposure to air pollution and noise nuisance
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within and surrounding Gwynedd.
Climate change adaptation	Support the resilience of Gwynedd to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding from fluvial, coastal and surface water sources.
Climate change mitigation	Reduce Gwynedd's contribution to climate change from activities which result in greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to meeting the Council's target of net zero.
Communities	Enhance design quality to create natural beautiful places for people that maintain and enhance community and settlement identity.
	Protect, promote and facilitate the community use of the Welsh language.
Economy and employment	Support a sustainable, diverse, and resilient economy, with innovative responses to changing conditions and support for a strong future workforce.
Equality, diversity and inclusion	Reduce poverty and inequality; tackle social exclusion and promote community cohesion.
Health and wellbeing	Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within Gwynedd, promoting healthy and sustainable places.
Historic environment	Preserve and enhance Gwynedd's heritage resource, including its historic environment and archaeological assets and promote understanding of Gwynedd's cultural heritage.
Housing	Support the delivery of a range of housing to meet identified needs, with a focus on improving affordability for those most in need?
Landscape	Protect and enhance the quality and character of Gwynedd's landscape, seascape and townscapes.
Soil resources and quality	Make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings to minimise pressure for

ISA theme	ISA objective
	greenfield development and protecting, where possible, higher grade agricultural land.
	Protect mineral resources and support waste management.
Transportation and movement	Increase sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel?
Water resources and quality	Conserve, protect and enhance the water environment, water quality and water resources.

Appendix B - Policy context

The below table presents the most relevant national plans, policies, strategies and documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the LDP and ISA.

Document title	Year of publication
The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)	2025
The Climate Change (Carbon Budget) (Wales) Regulations	2025
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development, flooding and coastal erosion	2025
Wales a Play Friendly Country	2025
Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12)	2024
Infrastructure (Wales) Act 2024	2024
Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024	2024
Climate Adaptation Strategy for Wales 2024	2024
Noise and Soundscape Plan for Wales 2023 to 2028	2023
Historic Environment (Wales) Act	2023
Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2023-2027	2023
LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales	2023
Welsh Government: Smarter working: a remote working strategy for Wales.	2022
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment	2022
Smarter working: a remote working strategy for Wales	2022
National transport delivery plan 2022 to 2027	2022
White Paper on a Clean Air (Wales) Bill	2021
Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide	2021
Welsh Government Active Travel Act Guidance	2021
Wales Transport Strategy	2021

Document title	Year of publication
National Development Framework (Future Wales: The National Plan)	2021
Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy for Wales	2021
Beyond Recycling: A strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality	2021
Planning and Enabling Healthy Environments: Incorporating a template for planning policy	2021
Wales Active Travel Strategy	2021
The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales	2020
The Clean Air Plan for Wales	2020
Reducing Carbon Emissions in Wales	2020
Placemaking Wales Charter	2020
Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures	2020
Building Better Places	2020
Welsh National Marine Plan	2019
Welsh Government Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) Statutory Guidance	2019
Prosperity for all: A Low Carbon Wales	2019
UK (third) National Adaptation Programme 2023 to 2028	2018
Creating Healthier Places and Spaces for our present and future generations	2018
Welsh Language Strategy	2017
UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations	2017
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment	2017
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 20: Planning and the Welsh Language	2017

Document title	Year of publication
Natural Resources Policy	2017
Cymraeg 2050	2017
Public Health (Wales) Act	2017
Environment (Wales) Act	2016
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design	2016
Updates to TAN11: Noise	2015
Planning (Wales) Act	2015
Nature Recovery Plan for Wales	2015
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act	2015
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 21: Waste	2014
Planning for Sustainable Buildings	2014
Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act	2014
Historic Environment Strategy for Wales	2013
Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013	2013
Towards Zero Waste One Wales: One Planet	2012
Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales	2011
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010	2010
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities	2010
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	2010
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5: Nature conservation and planning	2009
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16: Sport, recreation, and open space	2009
The UK Climate Change Act	2008
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18: Transport	2007

Document title	Year of publication
The Environmental Noise (Wales) Regulations 2006	2006
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 2: Planning and affordable housing	2006
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	2006
Air Quality Wales Regulations	2002
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	2000
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 11: Noise	1997
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 10: Tree preservation orders	1997
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 7: Outdoor advertisement control	1996
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act	1990
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	1981
National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949	1949
Cadw: Best-practice guidance	Various