ERYRI LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016 – 2031

Written Statement









PARC CENEDLAETHOL ERYRI
SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK



Aber Abermaw ©Visit Wales

ERYRI LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2016 – 2031

ADOPTED VERSION

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FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce you to the Eryri Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016-2031, a document which sets out the 15 year land use planning framework for Snowdonia National Park. The National Park Authority receives about 500-600 planning applications each year, and the revised LDP will provide the foundation for determining each planning application that we receive.

This LDP's predecessor (Eryri LDP 2007-2022) had performed well against targets, and its Strategy was considered to be effective or 'sound'. In view of this, and following consultation with relevant stakeholders, the Authority decided that a 'short form revision' was therefore considered appropriate. In simple terms, this basically means limited changes have been proposed to the revised LDP and the overall strategy for the revised LDP 2016-2031 remains the same as the previous LDP.

There have been some important legislative changes in Wales over recent years, with the creation of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. These legislations have helped shape the content of this revised LDP. It has helped how we use both our land and other natural resources – both of which are essential for us to achieve the well-being of a sustainable Wales.

Eryri is a special place – and it is important that the content of the LDP reflects this. It is a landscape of international importance, rich in its cultural heritage and wildlife. It is not surprising therefore that many millions each year visit the National Park to enjoy the scenery and to participate in outdoor activities. Eryri supports rural communities, their future and the future of the Welsh language. The low wage economy and high cost of housing exacerbated by pressures from in-migration together with a shortage of affordable housing is driving young people away from their native communities. Climate change and its implications for our communities and biodiversity and our response to this threat are all important in managing the 'Special Qualities' of Eryri.

We hope that the content of the revised LDP will continue to provide a robust framework for making sustainable planning decisions well into the future.



Elwyn Edwards

Chair of Planning and Access Committee





Betws-y-Coed ©Visit Wales

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Chapter 1

Introduction

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Local Development Plan aims to reflect the land use implications of the National Park Management Plan as well as providing an opportunity to deliver the spatial elements of other plans and strategies at the national, regional and local level. The Local Development Plan includes strategic policies and development policies which will deliver the long term spatial vision for the future of Snowdonia National Park. The Local Development Plan is accompanied by a set of Proposals and Inset Maps. A glossary of terms associated with the Local Development Plan process is included in Appendix 1. A wide range of stakeholders have helped to prepare the Local Development Plan, their continuing involvement in the process of implementation and monitoring will be important.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.2 All Local Development Plans are required to help deliver the Welsh Government's commitments on sustainable development. In order to ensure this compliance, Local Development Plans need to undergo a testing process to ensure that their strategic direction and policies are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable; this is what's referred to as the Sustainability Appraisal. Such an appraisal has been carried out for this revised Plan and has been published as a separate document.

1.3 In addition, under European Legislation[1], the Local Development Plan must undergo further testing to ensure that the content does not result in significant harm to the environment. Strategic Environmental Assessment undertaken during the revision of the Local Development Plan has indicated no negative effects upon the environment of Snowdonia, indeed the Local Development Plan seeks to improve the quality of the environment. The Strategic Environmental Assessment has been incorporated with the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

1.4 The revised Plan has also been subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment, a requirement under the Habitats Regulation Assessment Directive. This legislation has been developed in order to ensure that the highest level of protection is afforded to European designated sites; namely Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. A Habitats Regulation Assessment Report has been published to accompany the Local Development Plan. Akin to the assessments outlined above, the Local Development Plan seeks to improve the quality of all designated and notable sites within Snowdonia, rather than merely avoid any negative effects. This approach supports the Authority's first purpose.

Implementation and monitoring

1.5 Regular monitoring and review will be essential to ensure the continuing relevance and effectiveness of the revised Local Development Plan. The Plan will be monitored annually with an Annual Monitoring Report published in order to establish whether the policies are achieving their intended objectives or whether there are unexpected trends or significant changes that could necessitate an early or partial review. A major review of the Local Development Plan must be undertaken four years following the adoption of the Plan. There may be factors that could trigger the need for a review before four years. The implementation and monitoring mechanisms for the policies are included in Appendix 2. The monitoring framework includes reference to other organisations and other plans and strategies which may have a proactive influence on the implementation of policies. The Authority will also monitor the Park's Management Plan and consider any land use implications which may impinge on the Local Development Plan.

1 Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC



Aberdyfi ©Visit Wales

Using this document

1.6 This document includes policies to take forward the vision, objectives and spatial strategy of the Local Development Plan. The policies constitute an overall approach to future development in the Park and it **is important that the plan is read as a whole**. Many of the policies are inter-related and several policies may apply to one development proposal. Identifying all linked policies would not be practical. In order to keep the document concise, cross-referencing is only used where another policy is directly relevant. As a result, all policies should be considered where they are relevant to a particular development proposal. The Plan includes a proposals map and a constraints map.

1.7 The Local Development Plan includes strategic policies and development policies. Strategic policies provide the overarching approach for development while the development policies will help in delivering the strategic policies by providing further detailed guidance against which planning applications will be assessed.

1.8 The Local Development Plan does not repeat national planning policy and guidance although it does make some cross-reference. In addition to the policies contained in this plan, national planning policy and guidance will also be a material consideration when making decisions. The Local Development Plan also refers to Supplementary Planning Guidance which has already been prepared or will be produced by the Authority. A list of the Supplementary Planning Guidance is included in Appendix 8. This list is not exhaustive. These guidance documents will be used by the Authority in decision making and are material considerations. The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 places a greater emphasis on community engagement in planning decisions; Place Plans echo these ambitions. Place Plans should reflect the aspirations of the local community whilst also making synergies with the local planning authority's aspirations in Local Development Plan and Wellbeing Plan and will be given weight in planning decisions by being adopted as supplementary planning documents where appropriate.

2. The Development Strategy

2.1 This section delivers a response to the spatial vision for Snowdonia in light of the Local Development Plan objectives set out in Chapter 1.

National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

2.2 National Park purposes and duty[15] provide an important strategic focus for the Local Development Plan, as they help define the scope for future development in the area. Due to the special status of the Park, the impact that development will have on the area's natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the area's 'Special Qualities' will be of paramount importance in deciding future change.

2.3 Sustainable development is the second key focus of the plan. National Park purposes and duty provide a 'special context' for sustainability. The National Park purposes and duty together with sustainability principles underpin the objectives in the National Park Management Plan for which the Local Development Plan will seek to deliver the spatial elements. Strategic Policy A sets out what the National Park Authority believes will help deliver sustainable development in Snowdonia:

Strategic Policy A: National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development (A)

The Local Development Plan seeks to ensure that new development promotes the principles of sustainable development in ways which further National Park purposes and duty whilst conserving and enhancing the National Park's 'Special Qualities'. Proposals which compromise National Park purposes will be refused. The following considerations should be taken into account to help deliver sustainable development in Snowdonia:

i. Give the highest priority to the protection and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.

ii. Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the 'Special Qualities' of the area by the public.

iii. Safeguarding and improvement of the health, safety, economic and social well-being of local communities.

iv. Conserve and enhance the characteristic biodiversity of Snowdonia.

v. Respecting and enhancing the historic environment.

vi. Efficient use of land and infrastructure.

vii. Conservation of the quality and quantity of natural resources including water, air, soil and geodiversity.

viii. Encourage the sustainable development of settlements in ways which respect their character and function within the settlement strategy.

ix. Enablement of inclusive access to services, facilities and employment whilst minimising the environmental impact of transport.

x. Provision of good quality sustainable design.

xi. Promotion of development which meets the housing needs of local communities through a mix of dwelling types, and tenures predominantly through affordable housing to meet local need.

15 Further detail regarding National Park Purposes and Duty are contained in section 1.16 to 1.18

xii. Encouragement of developments that conserve, promote and enhance the linguistic heritage of Snowdonia's communities.

xiii. Securing development of previously developed land (brownfield land) where that land is in a sustainable location in preference to greenfield sites.

xiv. Preventing inappropriate development in areas which are at risk from flooding or which contribute to the risk of flooding.

xv. Enabling the production of Place Plans and adopting as Supplementary Planning Guidance where appropriate.

Degree of Change

2.4 Given the National Park designation, it is important that the high quality landscape of the National Park is protected. The Local Development Plan will aim to meet the needs of local communities within the environmental capacity of the Park. This will require a careful consideration of factors relating to change (appropriate to National Park context and 'Special Qualities', to provide affordable homes, economic development and making communities more self-sustaining) and restraint (to secure environmental protection). It is important to consider the capacity of each settlement to accommodate growth and their ability to accept different rates of development. The degree of change within Snowdonia will need to consider the influence of settlements outside the National Park. Settlements such as Bangor, Caernarfon, Conwy, Llandudno, Llanrwst, Machynlleth, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Tywyn, Barmouth and Porthmadog are all at the edges of Snowdonia and more suitable for employment on a relatively large scale as well as housing growth which reflects their role and area of influence and is within their individual environmental and cultural capacity.

Scale of Development

2.5 The relationship between the scale of development and its location is important when considering the impact that buildings and structure have on the landscape of an area. Given the sensitive environment within the Park and the scale of local communities, it is inevitable that certain types of large development will have significant effects on both the character of the landscape and the integrity of the Park environment. Legislation and national planning policy are quite clear that major development should not take place in National Parks other than in exceptional circumstances. 'Major development' is not precisely defined in national planning policy. It is therefore defined in this plan as meaning development which is more national[16] than local in character and in addition will have significant and long term impact on either the landscape, wildlife, cultural heritage or opportunities for understanding and enjoying the 'Special Qualities' of the area. Examples of development which will be classed as major include large scale development associated with: mineral working, quarries, large industrial development, large power generating schemes, high voltage electricity transmission, large scale renewable energy and low carbon energy schemes[17] large military development, large transport schemes, large tourism or leisure developments (this list is not exhaustive). More suitable sites for this scale of development should be sought outside the Park, in closer proximity to centres of population and industry, in locations where their impact on the landscape would not be as significant and would not jeopardise those aspects of the local economy which depend upon the high quality landscape.

16 'National' in this context means United Kingdom.

17 The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduced a new category of planning permission for Developments of National Significance (DNS). DNS include electricity-generating projects (other than wind) of between 10 and 50 MW and wind projects above 10 MW, and are decided by the Welsh Ministers. Projects under 10 MW are decided by local planning authorities.



Harlech Castle ©Visit Wales

Strategic Policy B: Major Development (B)

Major development will not be permitted within the National Park other than in exceptional circumstances where there is demonstrated to be an overriding public need. Proposals for major development will be subject to the most rigorous examination and include an assessment of all the following:

i. the need for the development in terms of national considerations.

ii. the cost of and scope for siting the development outside the National Park or the ability to meet the need for the development in some other way.

iii. the consequences and impact on local communities, the local economy, the environment and the cultural heritage of the National Park of permitting or refusing the development.

iv. the impact the development would have on National Park purposes and the extent that these could be moderated through appropriate and acceptable mitigation measures.

Where the Authority consider that the overall outcome of this assessment will result in an adverse and unacceptable impact on the National Park, permission for such major development will be refused.

Spatial Development Strategy

2.6 Snowdonia's population is comparatively small and geographically dispersed. Each of the 74 settlements has different capacity, ability and need for accommodating development and change. The distinct nature and characteristics of the Snowdonia National Park mean that a different approach is needed towards development. The spatial development strategy seeks to maintain the viability and vibrancy of our local communities in a sustainable way appropriate to the National Park. Previous engagement on the 'Discussion Papers' and on the Preferred Strategy demonstrated great support for an approach to development which reflects local need. Development should be focused in places which reduce the need to travel, especially for basic services and amenities. Many settlements have strong social and family ties generating a strong commitment to continue living within the home community. If no new housing, particularly affordable housing is permitted in such settlements new households will be forced to move away. This could change the population structure of communities and lead to a fundamental weakening of family support network and support for existing facilities with potentially significant implications for future economic and community wellbeing.

2.7 Different parts of the National Park have different characteristics and linkages with other areas. The Spatial Strategy looks to address the relationship of the National Park with the wider area, and develop a suitable framework for meeting generated needs. The Strategy has regard to the spatial and functional relationships between settlements in terms of housing, community services and facilities, employment and any informal support networks.

Zones of influence

2.8 The Local Development Plan identifies 'zones of influence' within and straddling the National Park. These areas have similar characteristics and have strong community links. This work (drawing on a wide range of surveys and related national, regional and local plans and strategies)[18] identifies the relationship and the influences of settlements outside the Park to inform the Spatial Development Strategy. The map in Appendix 4 identifies all the key centres within and outside the National Park within each zone. Further information about key issues and challenges for each zone of influence and how these issues are addressed in the Local Development Plan is contained in the Zones of Influence Background Paper. The Background Paper identifies the issues for each settlement and clarifies the links between settlements within and outside the National Park boundary. Service centres have been identified for each zone of influence. The work on the zones of influence has highlighted the important role of service centres in providing services and employment opportunities to surrounding settlements. It is recognised that settlements within the National Park rely heavily on service centres on the fringes of the National Park e.g. Bangor, Caernarfon, Bethesda, Llanberis, Penygroes, Llandudno, Llandudno Junction, Conwy, Llanrwst, Machynlleth, Tywyn, Barmouth, Porthmadog, Penrhyndeudraeth and Blaenau Ffestiniog. These centres will therefore need to sustain their importance to National Park residents, and adjoining authorities through partnership working should take this into consideration in their emerging local development plans.

18 Spatial Development Strategy – Background Paper (2017)

2.9 The Local Development Plan also takes into account the influence of the Wales Spatial Plan on the Strategy i.e. the primary hubs (Menai Hub and the Llandudno and Conwy Hub) and secondary hub (Porthmadog-Pwllheli-Penrhyndeudraeth). Any additional pressures for unsustainable growth within the National Park resulting from the hubs identified in the Wales Spatial Plan will be resisted.

2.10 The map in Appendix 5 summarises the links between National Park settlements and local service centres within and on the fringes of the National Park.

2.11 The underlying aim of this spatial development strategy is to recognise the influences of key centres on the fringes of the National Park, support the regional approach in the Wales Spatial Plan whilst also recognising the rural circumstances of the National Park and allowing for some flexibility to accommodate locally generated needs.

Settlement Hierarchy

2.12 A sustainable hierarchy of settlements is proposed as the organising basis for development and service provision within the National Park. The Sustainability Appraisal has demonstrated that organising and focusing development and services in this hierarchical way is the most efficient. The higher settlements are consistent with the Wales Spatial Plan and with neighbouring authorities' development plans while the lower hierarchy of settlement reflects the rural context of Snowdonia. The Local Development Plan will work with partners to build sustainable communities that have the housing, facilities and access to employment necessary to thrive. An analysis and ranking of settlements has been undertaken, based on the availability of local facilities and services and public transport provision within the settlement. The levels of the hierarchy are as follows:

Local Service Centres – Dolgellau and Bala

2.13 Dolgellau and Bala are identified as local service centres (with Dolgellau being the key service centre within the Dolgellau and Ardudwy zone and Bala the key service centre in the Bala zone). The Local Service Centres of Dolgellau and Bala are identified as areas of opportunity, where most housing and employment related development will take place, reflecting the scope for development, based on accessibility and scale of existing facilities.



Dolgellau ©Visit Wales

Dolgellau

2.14 Dolgellau is a small market town[19] which services many of the surrounding settlements. It has a significant number of open market housing planning commitments, therefore only affordable housing has been allocated here for the duration of the plan in order to meet the affordable local need within the area. There will however be opportunities for market housing on windfall sites. All of the key local community services are available within the settlement, including primary and secondary schools and tertiary education college, doctor's surgery, post office and supermarkets. There are also a number of community facilities including a community hospital, leisure centre, library and many sport clubs. Dolgellau is important as a centre for agriculture and forestry industries and for the Welsh language and culture. The A470 trunk road which links North and South Wales runs through the town linking it with Machynlleth and Aberystwyth. The A494 links the town with Bala and later the A5 to Wrexham and Shrewsbury. Dolgellau has an important role as a hub for bus services including Government supported Traws Cambria Services. The town centre does have difficult problems with traffic related issues which need to be resolved. Dolgellau lies at the foot of Cader Idris which attracts a large number of tourists each year, tourism is important to the economy of Dolgellau which itself attracts a significant number of tourists. Dolgellau's built heritage is of great importance, and it is important to regenerate the centre of the town in order to capitalise on that heritage to ensure its survival. There are many development constraints in Dolgellau including problems of flood risks and any major extension of the development boundary would have a major impact on the landscape. Dolgellau has been identified as being strategically placed as a primary settlement in the Wales Spatial Plan which provides a link between the Central Wales area and the North West Wales area. Although Dolgellau has been designated as a primary settlement in the Wales Spatial Plan the plan does not imply that significant physical growth is expected to take place.

19 with an estimated population of around 2,600



Dolgellau ©Visit Wales

Bala

2.15 Bala is a planned town established in 1310. Today it contains all of the key local facilities expected in a town of its size[20], primary and secondary schools, doctor's surgery, post office and a supermarket and food shop. Within the settlement there are a number of community facilities including a leisure centre and library and good access to employment opportunities. Bala and the surrounding area have a strong Welsh identity and tradition and is important as a centre of predominantly Welsh speaking area of the National Park. Both affordable and open market housing will be provided within the settlement over the period of the plan. There is some restriction on capacity in Bala due to flooding constraints. There are good road links to both North East and Mid Wales from Bala, the A494 links directly to the A5 which means good connectivity to Wrexham and Shrewsbury. Public transport provides access to Bala from surrounding smaller settlement as well as links from Bala to surrounding settlements. Tourism is important in Bala, large numbers of visitors are attracted annually to participate in various water sports within the area and there is potential for expansion of water based tourism in the area centred around Bala. Bala has been identified as a cross boundary settlement in the Wales Spatial Plan between North West and North East Wales.

20 An estimated population of around 1,950



Y Bala

Service Settlements: Harlech, Aberdyfi, Betws y Coed, Trawsfynydd and Llanberis (which is only partly within the Park).

2.16 These settlements typically have a population of over 500 with a primary school, doctor's surgery, post office and local food shop, however the primary school in Aberdyfi has recently closed. They also have a range of community facilities and a good public transport service. They are considered to have the ability to supplement the services provided by the Local Service Centres and to act as a service settlement for surrounding settlements and the rural hinterland. They perform an important function in enabling access to everyday needs without relying on the use of private car. Harlech, Aberdyfi, Betws y Coed and Llanberis have significant environmental development constraints, and as a result the Authority has had to look to some secondary settlements to deliver affordable housing to meet local needs. Betws y Coed and Trawsfynydd have been identified as cross boundary settlements in the Wales Spatial Plan, while Llanberis (which is partly within the Park), Harlech and Aberdyfi have been identified as key settlements. Trawsfynydd is also close to the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone which has been designated with the aim of providing employment opportunities. Although Llanberis only has a very small part located within the Park it is being classified as a Service Settlement in response to its overall scale and range of service provision and to ensure consistency with regional strategies and neighbouring development plan.

Secondary Settlements:

2.17 These settlements have one or more key local facilities and additional community facilities. These settlements have a more self-contained character serving the immediate locality and do not have the wider function of the Service Settlements. Nevertheless they fulfil an important service function to the local community and are considered to have the ability to provide some key local facilities for surrounding settlements and the rural hinterland. The settlements have a range of poor to good public transport provision (bearing in mind the different circumstances of some rural communities). Some limited development in these settlements will support their sustainability and the maintenance of existing services and facilities such as village school and also help meet rural needs.

Smaller Settlements:

2.18 These settlements do not have any key local facilities with very few community facilities within the settlement. The community facilities available are often being shared amongst groups of settlements.

Open countryside:

2.19 Open countryside is defined as areas with sporadic development, isolated group of dwellings or no development.

2.20 Appendix 6 contains a table and map providing further details of the settlement strategy for the Local Development Plan.

2.21 Strategic Policy C sets out how the limited opportunities for new development in the Park will be distributed to achieve the Local Development Plan's spatial vision and objectives. The policy allows for the development of new housing, employment and the provision of services and facilities within settlements according to its designation within the settlement hierarchy, with the overall aim of making communities more self-sustaining.

Strategic Policy C: Spatial Development Strategy (C)

Spatial development within Snowdonia National Park will be based on the following hierarchy:

Local Service Centres – Dolgellau and Bala

i. Open market housing and affordable housing for local needs.

ii. To support existing or provide new employment opportunities to support the rural economy.

iii. Improve existing and provide new facilities to serve local residents to strengthen its role as a local service centre and to support its role as a visitor destination.

iv. Retail development located in close proximity to the main retail areas.

Service Settlements

v. Small scale open market and affordable housing for local needs.

vi. Small scale employment development to support existing or provide new employment opportunities to support the rural economy in accordance with Development Policy 19.

vii. Improve existing and provide new community facilities to serve local residents.

viii. Strengthen its role as a service settlement serving the settlement and the immediate community.

ix. Support its role as a visitor destination.

x. Retail development within the retail areas of Harlech, Aberdyfi, Betws y Coed.

Secondary Settlements

xi. Small scale open market and affordable housing for local needs.

xii. Small scale employment development to support existing or provide new employment opportunities to support the rural economy in accordance with Development Policy 19.

xiii. Improve existing and provide new community facilities to serve local residents and strengthen its role in providing services to the rural hinterland.

Smaller Settlements

xiv. Single units of affordable housing for local needs.

xv. Improve existing and provide new community facilities to serve local residents where there are no suitable locations in settlements listed in the settlement hierarchy.

xvi. Conversion of buildings to support economic uses.

xvii. In exceptional circumstances new small scale employment and training development in accordance with Development Policy 19.

Open countryside

xviii. Conversion of rural buildings to support economic uses.

xix. Conversions of rural buildings for affordable housing for local needs.

xx. Replacement dwellings.

xxi. Housing relating to an essential need to live in the countryside in line with national planning policy.

xxii. Other essential community facilities to serve local residents where there are no suitable locations in settlements listed in the settlement hierarchy.

xxiii. Agricultural developments which are sympathetically accommodated in the landscape.

xxiv. In exceptional circumstances new small scale employment and training development in accordance with Development Policy 19.

xxv. Economic development as part of the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone allocation in accordance with Development Policy 27.

2.22 The Key diagram in Appendix 7 illustrates the Local Development Plan Strategy together with the linkages to larger settlements outside the Park boundary.

General Development Principles

2.23 There are certain broad requirements which all development should meet if it is to be acceptable within the National Park. Proposals must be acceptable in terms of their impact on the landscape, natural environment and cultural heritage, opportunities for understanding and enjoyment, quality and design, sustainable use of resources, amenity, highway safety, flood risk and infrastructure. Development Policy 1 sets out an important context for the topic based policies contained in this plan.



Betws-y-Coed ©Visit Wales

Development Policy 1: General Development Principles (1)

To conserve and enhance the 'Special Qualities' and purposes of the National Park, development will only be permitted where all the following apply:

i. The nature, location and siting, height, form and scale of the development is compatible with the capacity and character of the site and locality within which it is located.

ii. A development within the domestic curtilage of a dwelling will not detract from the character and form of the existing dwelling or its setting in the landscape.

iii. The development is not unduly prominent in the landscape and will not significantly harm the amenity of neighbouring property.

iv. The development reflects a good sustainable design standard, uses materials that are sympathetic to or enhance their surroundings and conforms with Development Policy 6: Sustainable Design and Materials.

v. The development will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the characteristic biodiversity of Snowdonia, particularly habitats and species protected under national and European legislation.

vi. The development does not result in the loss of landscape features, including woodland, and Ancient Semi-Natural woodland in particular, healthy trees, hedgerows, dry stone walls or damage any important open space or public view.

vii. An appropriate access meeting highway standards exists or can be provided without harm to the character of the locality or neighbouring amenity.

viii. Adequate provision of car parking and on-site turning areas are provided where necessary which are appropriate to the scale of the proposed development. Car parking surfaces should be permeable where appropriate to the development.

ix. The traffic implications of the development do not result in volumes or types of traffic which will create highway or safety problems on the local road network, or significantly harm the landscape or amenity of local people.

x. Appropriate services and infrastructure can be provided without compromising the quality and character of the landscape and cultural heritage.

xi. The development will not have an unacceptable adverse impact, through increased resource use, discharges or emissions, on public health, surface and ground water (quality, quantity or ecology), air quality, soil and the best and most versatile agricultural land.

xii. The development is compatible with, and does not cause significant harm, to the environment, neighbouring residential amenity or the amenity of the Park by way of noise, dust, vibration, odour, light pollution, hazardous materials or waste production.

xiii. The development will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the quiet enjoyment of the area by the public.

xiv. The development will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on public rights of way, other recreational routes or open country.

xv. Land stability can be achieved without causing unacceptable environmental or landscape impact.

xvi. The risks of, and consequences of flooding can be managed on and off site to an acceptable level in line with national planning policy.

3. Protecting, Enhancing and Managing the Natural Environment

3.1 This section delivers a response to the following objectives:

Ensure that all development is undertaken in a way that respects designated nature conservation sites and ensures the protection and enhancement of the diversity and abundance of wildlife habitats and protected species.

To manage the effects of climate change through mitigation and adaptation including reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, reductions in energy consumption and acceptable development planning with regard to flood risk.

Encourage, where appropriate the use of the National Park's natural resources for small scale renewable energy power generating schemes to meet local needs without harm to the 'Special Qualities' of the area.

Conserve and enhance the National Park's natural resources including its geodiversity and water, soil and air quality.

Protect and enhance the natural beauty of the National Park's landscape and geodiversity.

Promote waste minimisation and ensure the provision of sustainable, integrated waste management and recycling facilities.

Natural Environment

3.2 The first purpose of National Park designation places a responsibility to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park. It is the complex interaction between people, wildlife and the environment that has, over time, given rise to Snowdonia's 'Special Qualities' which are so highly valued today and which contribute greatly to the quality of life of both the Park's residents and the many visitors to the area.

3.3 The Local Development Plan has a crucial role to play in ensuring that these 'Special Qualities' are conserved and enhanced - a task made more difficult by climate change. There is a greater impetus than ever to plan for, manage, adapt to, and mitigate the possible consequences of climate change and its effects on Snowdonia.

3.4 A fifth of Snowdonia is statutorily protected because of its wildlife, geomorphological and geological interest, with over half of this area designated, under the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994, as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). However, nature conservation interests in Snowdonia are not limited to designated sites and protected species. Some species are statutorily protected and their protection through the planning process is a material consideration. The National Park will advise developers that they must comply with any statutory species protection requirement as referred to in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and the Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5: Nature Conservation and Planning. This will also involve the need for public authorities to comply with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The National Park will also take into account development affecting non statutory sites of regionally important geological interest (RIGS). The plan's policies will seek to provide for the conservation, enhancement, sustainable management and, where appropriate, the restoration of networks of natural habitats including wildlife corridors, green spaces including a network of open spaces designated in the Plan as supported by TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning.

3.5 Maintaining and enhancing Snowdonia's biodiversity is a cornerstone of sustainability. The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) identifies the most important habitats and species found in Snowdonia. Habitats and Species Action Plans (H/SAPs) contained in the document reinforce the importance of these areas and species, not only in terms of their national and international significance but also for their local importance. Further details on development and biodiversity and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan is set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance[23].

3.6 Much of the National Park coastline, has over the years, been developed to a greater or lesser extent. Although the resort towns of Barmouth, Fairbourne and Tywyn were excluded when the Park boundary was defined, agricultural 'improvement', including the limited reclamation of saltmarshes, roads, railways and large static caravan sites can all be found along the coastline.

3.7 As a result only small areas of Snowdonia's coastline can be described as having a largely unspoilt character. These are identified on the Proposals map as the Undeveloped Coast. They are broadly coterminous with the coastal features identified by Section 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985 in that they are '*areas of …, cliff or foreshore (including any bank, barrier, beach, flat or other land adjacent to the foreshore), the natural beauty of which the Authority considers is particularly important to conserve'*. In addition areas of coastal heath on cliffs and former cliffs have been included south of Llwyngwril along with the small enclosed fields which are characteristic of this area. Strategic Policy D refers to the protection of local sites of nature conservation importance, national designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and international designated sites such as Ramsar sites. All these designations are shown on the Proposals Map although in many cases one designation overlaps the other. The Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) will discuss the importance of these designations in more detail and provide maps for each designation.

23 SPG 6: Nature Conservation and Biodiversity



Harlech ©Visit Wales

Strategic Policy D: Natural Environment (D)

The natural resources, biodiversity, geodiversity and 'Special Qualities' of the Snowdonia National Park will be protected from inappropriate development. Where development is deemed acceptable developers will be expected to ensure that the natural environment is protected and enhanced.

Proposals should not adversely affect the National Park's biodiversity resources including designated sites from an international through to a local level, as well as wider biodiversity resources e.g. habitats and species outside designated sites.

Development proposals which are likely to adversely affect the integrity of European designated sites (either alone or in combination with other plans of projects) will not be permitted unless the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 have been fulfilled and hence the following criteria can be met:

i. There is no alternative solution.

ii. There are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest for the development.

The following requirements will apply to development affecting nationally and locally designated sites:

iii. The location, design and construction of the development is such that damage to nature conservation features are mitigated, and opportunities for nature conservation gain are taken.

iv. Compensatory measures are provided if necessary.

v. The remaining nature conservation features are protected and enhanced and provision is made for their management.

Development will only be permitted within the Undeveloped Coast where it can be demonstrated that a coastal location is essential. Development which harms the unspoilt landscape character or wildlife habitats will not be permitted.

Development proposals which are likely to adversely affect habitats and species listed in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan will be subject to the guidelines of the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Local Biodiversity.

Landscape

3.8 The landscape of Snowdonia was designated as a National Park because of its spectacular scenery, natural beauty and rich cultural heritage, which all contribute to its 'Special Qualities'. The influence of many generations of people working, inhabiting and otherwise shaping the landscape can be seen in its distinctive and varied character today. Snowdonia's landscapes include rugged mountains, high moorland, wooded valleys, lakes, waterfalls, estuaries and coast which all contribute to 'Special Qualities' of the area. The impact of these landscapes is enhanced in many locations by a sense of tranquillity and remoteness. Some upland landscapes, where development is sparse, or absent, are inherently dark at night and can be considered to be "Dark Landscapes". These contribute to Snowdonia's night-time tranquillity and sense of wildness and can lead to broader health and well-being benefits of both residents and visitors alike.



Y Lliwedd ©Visit Wales


Trawsfynydd ©Keith O'Brien

Dark Skies Reserve

3.9 In November 2015 the Snowdonia National Park was awarded the status of Dark Sky Reserve. A Dark Skies Reserve designation is a prestigious award given by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) to those discrete areas that have proven that the quality of their night sky is outstanding and have demonstrated that real efforts are being made to reduce obtrusive light pollution.

3.10 As a result of this designation residents and visitors to Snowdonia, and the area's biodiversity, will be able to see various benefits, which may include the following:

- Less harmful impacts on the area's nocturnal wildlife arising from a reduction of stray artificial light.
- An improvement in the overall quality of the area's environment and sense of night-time tranquillity.
- The potential for the local economy to be improved as Snowdonia will have a new natural attraction for visitors to the area at quiet periods the year.

3.11 In October 2016 the SNPA published Supplementary Planning Guidance on Obtrusive Lighting (Light Pollution). Whilst the whole of the National Park is designated a Dark Skies Reserve, there are a number of core areas, shown on the Proposals Map, where proposals for new lighting must be appropriate to the task and compliant with the requirements of the "Snowdonia Dark Sky Reserve External Lighting Masterplan" which is available on the Authority's website.

3.12 Paragraph 6.8 of PPW (ed 10 December 2018) refers to light pollution and recognises the need to balance the adverse impacts of lighting on the environment, amenity and wildlife with the need to provide security and enable night-time recreational and sporting events to take place.

Areas of Natural Beauty

3.13 Areas of Natural Beauty, as defined under Section 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside Amendment Act 1985, have been identified on the Proposals Map. These areas often coincide with area of open country (as defined and mapped under CRoW Act 2000) and within areas of nature conservation importance. They include extensive tracts of unenclosed uplands, heather moorland and semi natural mountain grassland. A rapid review undertaken in 2016 revealed an increase in the total area, arising mainly from the clear-felling of some conifer plantations which were then not re-stocked. This will further aid work already done in the re-generating of upland peat bogs, restoring the ecological services they provide, such as carbon sequestration and water retention in the upper parts of river catchments.

3.14 The Authority expects prospective developers to recognise their sensitivity and value and to prove that any development will not adversely affect their character or amenity.

The Dyfi Biosphere Reserve

3.15 UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme is comprised of a series of world network of Biosphere Reserves. Much of the catchment of the Afon Dyfi was granted Biosphere Reserve status by UNESCO in 2009.

3.16 Biosphere Reserves are model regions for sustainable development and test sites for conservation approaches where the local community collaborates to live in harmony with its environment. They are considered to be the main international recognition for demonstrating excellence in sustainable development. The primary objective of Biosphere Reserves is to promote a balanced relationship between people and their natural environment by educating and inspiring the local community to work together for a more sustainable future.

3.17 Biosphere Reserves are comprised of three interrelated zones:

- The Core Area is an area that is already highly protected for the long-term and is of at least European importance for its ecosystems. It may be designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protected Area (SPA). In the case of the Dyfi the core area is based around the estuary.
- The Buffer Zone surrounds, or is contiguous to the core area. It helps conserve the core area, and can accommodate positive human engagement, including research, education, training, tourism, extensive agriculture, or sustainable forestry. In the case of the Dyfi the zone comprises of a number of SSSIs in Ceredigion and Powys.
- The Transition Area is the large outer area of a reserve where people live and work, using the natural resources of the area in a sustainable manner. In the Dyfi Biosphere this area include those community council areas within the Dyfi catchment. These include the community council areas inside the National Park namely Aberdyfi, Pennal and Dinas Mawddwy.

3.18 Part of the Dyfi Biosphere lies within the National Park boundaries and there are considerable synergies between the objectives of the Biosphere, this Plan and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.



Dyfi Estuary & Aberdyfi ©Visit Wales

Supplementary Planning Guidance on the Landscapes and Seascapes of Eryri

3.19 The Authority is committed to promoting the protection, management and planning of Snowdonia's landscape and to applying the principles of the European Landscape Convention[24]. Its Supplementary Planning Guidance on the Landscapes of Eryri identifies 25 distinctive Landscape Character Areas and explains:

- *how the Authority, working with others, will promote interaction between people and their environment and will work to improve awareness and understanding of landscape and its value, as a unifying framework for all land use / land use sectors;*
- *how the authority will promote a more accessible, integrated and forward looking approach to managing inherited landscapes and shaping new landscapes;*
- *how the LANDMAP[25] system can be used to assist in landscape analysis, development of design principles and decision making.*

Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

3.20 Following on from this work Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity has been developed. This provides detailed Guidance on the potential landscape and visual impacts of specific types of development, namely:-

- Wind turbines
- Telecommunication masts and
- Static caravan and chalet parks

3.21 The sensitivity and capacity of each of the 25 Landscape Character Areas to these types of development identified in the Landscapes of Eryri have been assessed using a common methodology (also used in Gwynedd and Anglesey). The outcomes of the assessment will be an aid to decision-making on planning applications. Developers seeking to promote these types of development in the National Park will therefore need to have regard to this Guidance.

3.22 Developments outside the National Park may also have an adverse impact on landscape character and affect views from and into the area. The Authority also recognises the need to discuss with neighbouring Authorities the effects of developments on the landscape. The Authority will consider the landscape and visual impact, including the effects of lighting on dark landscapes, of proposals close to the National Park boundary and how these may impact on the National Park purposes. Wherever possible it will seek to mitigate any potential adverse impacts.

24 An Europe wide agreement supported by the Council of Europe, 2004

25 LANDMAP is a national information system that was devised by NRW, its purpose as a methodology is to seek consistency in how landscape is taken into consideration in decision making.



Nant Ffrancon & Glyderau ©Visit Wales

Development Policy 2: Development and the Landscape (2)

The scale and design of new development, including its setting, landscaping and integration should respect and conserve the character, qualities and views of the landscape. Unacceptable impacts on the landscape will be resisted and particular regard will be had to the protection of:

i. The Snowdonia Dark Skies Reserve, in particular Core Areas.

ii. The Dyfi Biosphere Reserve.

iii. Section 3 areas of natural beauty[26].

iv. Undeveloped coast.

v. Panoramas visible from significant viewpoints.

vi. Sensitive Landscape Character Areas as defined in the Supplementary Planning Guidance documents the Landscapes of Eryri and the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment.

Climate Change

3.23 Climate change will undoubtedly impact on wildlife; it is important therefore to conserve the integrity of the wider natural environment and nature conservation interests of the National Park so as to facilitate adaptation by, and migration of, species. Watercourses, hedgerows and woodlands can all act as wildlife corridors between designated sites as well as being valuable habitats in their own right.

3.24 One of the ways to meet the challenge of climate change is by reducing waste and ensuring careful management of natural resources in a sustainable manner. Among other things, that means using energy much more efficiently, substituting renewable forms of energy for use of fossil fuels, and reducing emissions from the use of fossil fuels for transport.

3.25 Soils and peaty upland soils in particular can store large amounts of carbon. Although relatively large areas of Snowdonia are still blanketed in such soils, there have been significant afforestation and agricultural 'improvements' in the uplands. This has led to significant loss of carbon into the atmosphere. Draining the soils also reduces their capacity to store water and this can exacerbate flood events and lead to erosion. The conservation and careful management of such soils is now very important in the context of combating climate change. Woodland also plays a key role in these issues; increasing the cover of woodland, along with protecting existing woodlands and Ancient Semi-Natural woodlands in particular, would have numerous benefits including improving ecological connectivity if carried out sympathetically. It will be important for the Plan to be read as a whole but certain policies such as Development Policies 3 and 6 should be properly considered in order to make a local contribution in seeking to mitigate against climate change. Likewise the need to reduce travel patterns, especially a reduction in the use of the private car will have a direct impact on influencing climate change. One impact already felt locally is the increase in flood risk areas. Development will be kept away from such areas and only allowed in accordance with the requirements of TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk.

[26] As defined under section 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside Amendment Act 1985.

Strategic Policy Dd: Climate Change (Dd)

The contribution that emissions of greenhouse gases from the National Park make to climate change will be reduced and the impacts of climate change on the National Park will be addressed in this Plan by:

i. Ensuring that any coastal and flood protection works, including managed realignment, considered to be necessary have no adverse environmental impacts or that they can be satisfactorily mitigated.

ii. Conserving and enhancing areas of woodland, upland soils and peatland areas to assist in carbon retention, water storage and flood prevention.

iii. Facilitating species adaptation and migration through protecting habitat connectivity corridors and enhancing biodiversity.

iv. Directing development to locations which reduces the need to travel, especially by private car.

Energy

3.26 There is a long tradition of using water power to generate electricity in North Wales. The 20 or so established hydro power stations which are located in, or use water from, Snowdonia along with 63 micro-hydro schemes and a similar number of other microgeneration permissions granted since the LDP was adopted in 2011 have a combined total installed capacity of some 94.6 Megawatts (MW), with the potential to generate 289.7GWh/yr[27]. This is far in excess of local domestic demand and results in the area being a net exporter of electricity. The SNPA recognises the important contribution it makes as an Authority on a national level and the potential opportunities that may exist for this to continue through the development of new facilities.

3.27 The construction of two large-scale power stations in Snowdonia, the UK's only inland Magnox nuclear power station at Trawsfynydd and the pump storage power station at nearby Tanygrisiau (along with a similar one just outside the Park at Dinorwig), aroused considerable controversy not only because of their siting but also because of the impact of high voltage transmission lines crossing the National Park to connect to the National Grid.

3.28 The Dinorwig and Tanygrisiau pumped storage schemes, whose catchments and upper reservoirs lie within the National Park, can provide in excess of 2000MW within a very short time-scale to meet peaks in demand for electricity, performing a vital role in the UK's national grid. The Renewable Energy Assessment (May 2017) concluded that the National Park may offer potential opportunities for further hydropower development over the plan period, including pumped storage. Should any future large scale development proposals come forward, they will be assessed against Strategic Policy B as development which will make a contribution to the national energy need and the development of a low carbon economy.

3.29 Trawsfynydd nuclear power station stopped generating in 1993 and is currently being decommissioned. New uses are being sought at the site, which include low carbon energy businesses and energy generation technologies as well as other employment uses in the ICT, Energy and Environment sectors, and development proposals may come forward as decommissioning progresses.

[27] Background Paper 22: Renewable Energy Assessment (May 2017).

3.30 The Welsh Government has an established target of 2GW of installed onshore capacity for wind energy developments by 2015/17. Technical Advice Note 8 sets out Welsh Government's view that large-scale (defined as being over 25MW installed capacity) onshore wind energy developments should be concentrated into particular areas defined as Strategic Search Areas (SSAs).

3.31 Welsh Government Policy does not specifically exclude the National Parks as areas for the location of small-scale wind energy developments of less than 5MW. However given the very large size of modern wind turbines, often in excess of 100m to blade tip and visible up to 30kms, it is highly likely that even a single turbine of this size would have a significant detrimental visual impact on the landscape and as such would be inappropriate within the National Park. The Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity SPG (see above) indicates that the National Park Landscape Character Areas range from Medium-High to Very High sensitivity to wind turbine developments. Consideration will also be given to individual and cumulative impact of wind turbine proposals close to the National Park boundary, especially with regard to landscape and visual effect.

3.32 Whilst large-scale energy power generation projects are generally considered incompatible with National Park status an assessment of renewable energy in Snowdonia considered that scope might exist to contribute to reduce demand for electricity derived from fossil fuels through efficiency savings and through microgeneration and small-scale renewable energy developments to meet domestic or community needs. These may include small-scale hydro, domestic wind turbines, photovoltaics, biomass and landfill gas. Schemes up to 5MW may also offer some potential in Snowdonia and will be considered favourably, provided they do not cause harm to landscape, amenity and nature conservation and heritage interests.

3.33 The table below sets out the findings of the revised Renewable Energy Assessment for the National Park (2017). It provides an estimation of the theoretical renewable energy capacity available within Snowdonia. It does not provide a target for renewable energy developments.

Category	Sub-Category	Potential Capacity (MWe) [Electricity]	Potential Capacity (MWt) [Heat]	Potential Generation (GWh) [Electricity]	Potential Generation (GWh) [Heat]
Micro-wind		18.4	-	16.1	-
Biomass	Managed Woodland	4	8	31.55	63.11
	Energy Crops	5.66	11.33	44.65	89.31
Anaerobic Digestion	Animal Manure	0.18	0.28	1.42	1.2
	Poultry Litter	0.048	0.072	0.37	0.32
	Sewage Sludge[28]	0.07	0.10	0.52	0.43
Landfill Gas	Gas engine	2.13	-	11.2	-
Hydropower	Low head	1.9	-	6.1	-
	High head	2.0	-	6.5	-
Microgeneration	Solar	17.3	17.3	15.15	15.15
	Heat Pumps	-	55	-	-
	Total	51.7	92.1	133.56	169.52

28 It is intended that a substantial amount of sewage sludge from Snowdonia will be transported to the Advanced Disgester at Treborth Waste Water Treatment Plant.

3.34 The Authority has adopted Guidance for Sustainable Design which provides guidance on siting and building orientation and includes details about the requirement for Energy Statements. It has also produced Supplementary Planning Guidance on Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development.

3.35 Small localised energy generating projects can have the added benefit of taking advantage of local conditions and at the same time improving the quality of life in smaller communities. Such proposals will be supported through the policy. It will be important for the Plan to be read as a whole and in particular that any small scale renewable energy project conforms with Development Policy 1: General Development Principles.

Development Policy 3: Energy (3)

Where appropriate planning applications should be accompanied by an Energy Statement either separately or as part of the Design and Access Statement and should take into account the Supplementary Planning Guidance documents on Sustainable Design and Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Developments.

Wherever possible, developments should be sited and orientated to take advantage of solar gain and shelter and incorporate passive design strategies and a fabric-first approach to energy efficiency. Consideration should be given to the potential for maximising the renewable energy technologies.

Renewable Energy

Within the National Park renewable energy schemes will be supported provided they satisfactorily address the planning considerations for different technologies set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Developments.

- Microgeneration (under 50kW) and smaller-scale renewable energy schemes will be considered favourably, provided they do not cause harm to landscape, amenity, nature conservation and heritage interests.
- Sub Local Authority scale schemes (up to 5MW) may also offer some potential in Snowdonia and will be permitted subject to the same considerations.

Larger Local Authority Scale (greater than 5MW) and Strategic renewable energy schemes are generally considered to be incompatible with National Park purposes and would need to satisfy Strategic Policy B; Major Development.

Minerals

3.36 Although the National Park boundary was drawn specifically to exclude areas where large-scale mining and quarrying was taking place, a variety of minerals such as slate, hard rock and metals, including gold, copper and lead, are found, and have been worked, within Snowdonia.

3.37 National policy as set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 10. Dec 2018) states that: Minerals development should not take place in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), save in exceptional circumstances. All mineral applications must therefore be subject to the most rigorous examination and all major mineral developments demonstrated to be in the public interest before being allowed to proceed (paragraph 5.14.35).

4. Protecting and Enhancing the Cultural and Historic Environment

4.1 This section delivers a response to the following objectives:

To understand, value, protect and enhance the area's historic environment including archaeological remains and historic landscapes and to promote development that enhances Snowdonia's built heritage and townscape.

To protect and enhance the natural beauty of the National Park's landscape by ensuring that development meets good sustainable design standards and respects the 'Special Qualities' of the area and the purposes of the National Park.

The Historic Environment

4.2 There is a rich built heritage within the National Park, with 14 Conservation Areas, 1911 listed buildings, 21 Historic Parks and Gardens, Harlech Castle (an UNESCO[30] World Heritage Site), landscapes of historic interest and 377 Scheduled Ancient Monuments[31], including Castell y Bere and Castell Dolwyddelan. All of these contribute to the distinctive character of the built and landscape environment within the Park. Conservation and enhancement of this built heritage is an important factor when considering development within or adjacent to these special areas. There are indications of established ancient routeways through the landscape from at least the Bronze Age onwards, becoming more extensive with the Roman road network and drovers' tracks. The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 has introduced new measures for the positive management of change in the historic environment. A suite of advice and guidance will be produced to complement the act and the Authority will ensure that guidance relevant to protecting heritage assets within the National Park are incorporated into Supplementary Planning Guidance. This Guidance entitled 'The Historic Environment' will be prepared to give further guidance on development which impact on historic buildings or designations and how best to preserve and enhance the historic environment for future generations to enjoy. In addition to any guidance related to the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the SPG will take account of guidance contained in Planning Policy Wales and will emphasise what is important locally and how it should be preserved and protected.

Conservation Areas

4.3 The boundaries of the 14 Conservation Areas are shown on the Inset Maps; these were designated due to their special architectural or historic interest.

4.4 The purpose of designating Conservation Areas is to both preserve and enhance the special architectural or historic interest of such areas and to employ positive measures to ensure building preservation. It is proposed that any development within a Conservation Area should be carried out with special attention paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

4.5 Existing buildings within the Conservation Areas will be protected. Any applications for consent to demolish will not be granted where there will be a loss of a building that makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. If an application for demolition is submitted plans for the re-development of the site will have to have been approved before the application is granted. The Authority will expect full planning permission to be sought, not outline, due to the sensitive nature within the Conservation Areas.

30 UNESCO – *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation*

31 Updated May 2017.

4.6 The Authority is committed to ensuring that Conservation Areas continue to be protected from inappropriate development and that where possible the area and setting are enhanced. Any development within a conservation area should respect its setting and character and will be informed by a series of Conservation Area Management Plans for individual areas to be prepared by the Authority. These management plans will outline the particular 'Special Qualities' in each of the areas that contribute to its character and outline the proposals for protecting and managing these 'Special Qualities'.

World Heritage Site – Harlech

4.7 The designation of a site as a UNESCO World Heritage Site highlights the outstanding national and international importance of the site. The Castle at Harlech is one of four castles that collectively make up The Castles and Town Walls of Edward I in Gwynedd, World Heritage Site. The rich heritage of Harlech World Heritage Site will become much more important in the future with the growth of sustainable tourism and is seen as an economic asset for the National Park as well as a cultural asset.

4.8 Development should not be permitted where it may have an adverse affect on the site. The site is an important part of the cultural heritage of the area and therefore warrants protection from inappropriate development. Furthermore the World Heritage Site is an important tourist attraction within the National Park. In 2007 over 90,000 people visited the castle at Harlech. As tourism is one of the biggest employers within the National Park, it is important that the integrity of the site is safeguarded to ensure that it continues to draw visitors for years to come. Development that would have a negative effect on the castle, its setting or significant views as defined in the World Heritage Site Management Plan will not be permitted by the National Park.

Candidate World Heritage Site

4.9 In order to ensure suitable recognition of how the slate industry shaped the social, political, economic and cultural landscape of Wales, in June 2010 a successful application was made for the North Wales Slate Industry World Heritage Site to be included on the UK's tentative list to be submitted to UNESCO. The tentative list was formally presented to UNESCO in January 2012. Work is ongoing to prepare the required documentation to support a nomination for the Slate Industry World Heritage Site. In order to protect the potential sites any development which would adversely affect the Candidate World Heritage Site or its setting in any way will not be permitted. The site is made up of 7 different areas throughout Gwynedd and those sites which are within the National Park will be shown on the LDP constraints maps.

Historic Parks and Gardens

4.10 Cadw maintains a Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales which is in two parts Part 1: Parks and Gardens and Part 2.1 Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest and Part 2.2 Landscapes of Special Historic Interest. The historic parks and gardens are graded on the basis of historic importance and value and include grade I, II and II*. The locations of these Gardens are shown on the proposals maps. Planning Policy Wales requires that local planning authorities protect and enhance registered historic parks and gardens and their settings and they should be a material consideration when determining planning applications. Local planning authorities are also asked to consult Cadw on applications where developments are likely to affect the site of a registered historic park and garden, or its setting. There are currently 21 Historic Parks and Gardens within the park on the register kept by Cadw.

4.11 Some of the Historic Parks and Gardens also contain kitchen gardens that should be afforded the same protection from inappropriate development. The Historic Environment SPG will provide further information regarding historic parks and gardens, their settings and appropriate development within them.

4.12 Further details can be found in the National Park Management Plan, The Conservation Area Appraisals and the World Heritage Site Management Plan. National policy contained in Planning Policy Wales also gives a good oversight of how national policies should be applied locally.

Strategic Policy Ff: Historic Environment (Ff)

The historic landscape, heritage assets and cultural heritage of Snowdonia National Park will be conserved and enhanced, due to their contribution to the character and 'Special Qualities' of the National Park. Particular protection will be given to the following archaeological, architectural, historic or cultural assets and where appropriate, their settings.

Development will not be permitted that will adversely affect in any way the following Heritage Assets, or where appropriate their settings and significant views:

i. Conservation Areas
ii. World Heritage Sites
iii. Candidate World Heritage Sites
iv. Scheduled Monuments and other sites of archaeological importance
v. Historic landscapes, parks and gardens
vi. Listed Buildings
vii. Traditional Buildings

Sustainable Design and Materials

4.13 In order to maintain the distinctiveness and the character of settlements within the National Park, it is important that any new development fits in with the existing settlement pattern and character. Supplementary Design Guidance for Sustainable Development is available and will be supplemented by Snowdonia specific guidance to secure local distinctiveness through design. The document aims to encourage new development to be sustainable, of high quality and enhance the appearance of the National Park. The aim of national policy, contained in Planning Policy Wales, is to move towards more sustainable and zero carbon buildings in Wales and one way this can be achieved is by ensuring all new buildings comply with National Building Standards. As well as considering the policy below it will be important to cross reference with Development Policy 3 on Energy to ensure that energy reduction is incorporated into designs at the outset and is included in an energy statement.



Castell y Bere

Development Policy 6: Sustainable Design and Materials (6)

In order to promote sustainable development within the National Park all forms of new built development will attain at least the national sustainable building requirements.

With regard to National Park setting and the Authority's commitment to social inclusion, development proposals will be required to take into consideration the following:

i. Inclusive design
ii. Landscape protection and enhancement
iii. Biodiversity protection and enhancement
iv. The Historic Environment
v. Environmental sustainability
vi. Cultural identity
vii. An Integrated energy statement

Within the National Park natural Welsh mineral slate roofing or an approved equivalent material with the same colour, texture and weathering characteristics will be required on new buildings and extensions.

As an exception to the use of mineral slate roofing, alternative appropriately coloured and textured natural materials and appropriately designed and located renewable energy proposals will be considered.

Proposal should also accord with Development Policy 3: Energy.

Listed and Traditional buildings

4.14 1911 buildings have been listed as being of special architectural or historic interest within the National Park, 13 being Grade I and 119 buildings at Grade II*. In order to protect this heritage, restrictions are necessary if important buildings are to be protected from unsympathetic change. Any building works to a Listed Building whether internally or externally or within its curtilage, will only be supported where it can be shown that there will be no significant harm to the special historic or architectural character and setting of the building.

4.15 Before granting planning consent for changes to Listed Buildings, the Authority will require full details and an inventory of the building in its present state. In certain cases where the building is a particularly fine example, or the nature and extent of the works dictate, it may be appropriate to require a more detailed survey in advance of any works being carried out. Demolition of a Grade I or II* building should be avoided at all costs. All proposals for demolition, including the removal of internal features, require Listed Building Consent.

4.16 It is important to assess the impact that a proposed development will have on the setting of any nearby Listed Building. The Authority will therefore require the submission of a full rather than an outline application for any development proposal in close proximity to a Listed Building so that the full visual impact of the completed proposal can be fully assessed. The proposed development should respect the character and style of the Listed Building in terms of its siting, scale, design and the materials used in its construction.

4.17 Details of acceptable design approaches and suitable materials to be used for the conversion or re-use of Listed Buildings and buildings of traditional form are included in the Authority's Design Guides. Planning applications should include details of all alterations and other works to demonstrate the effect of the proposal on the appearance, character and setting of the building.

4.18 Further details regarding appropriate development in and around listed buildings will be available within the Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled 'The Historic Environment'. This guidance will also outline the conditions surrounding the criteria that are necessary before demolition of listed buildings will be allowed.

The Welsh Language and the Social and Cultural Fabric of Communities

5.45 The Welsh language is fundamental to the cultural richness of Snowdonia. The Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric of all the communities in Snowdonia. The maintenance and the prosperity of the language in the future forms an obvious part of the work of protecting heritage within the Park, and thus fulfilling one of the main aims of the National Parks and their related duty to 'foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities'.

5.46 The Welsh language is spoken by 58.6% of the total population and in some communities the language is spoken by over 75% of the residents. National planning policy recognises the importance of the Welsh language as a planning matter. The land use planning system should take account of the needs and interest of the Welsh language and in doing so contribute to its well-being. The Welsh language has been taken into account in the formulation of the Local Development Plan polices, including the capacity of different areas and communities to accommodate development without detriment to the position of the Welsh language. To ensure that communities develop in a sustainable manner it is essential, when contemplating change, to consider all the factors influencing the situation and whether new development being planned is appropriate and relevant.

5.47 In order to be able to make an informed decision on applications that may have an effect on the future of the Welsh language within communities the Authority has prepared Supplementary Planning Guidance (3) Planning and the Welsh Language. The guidance seeks to address the issue by viewing communities in a holistic manner, giving due regard to language as an element which is an integral part of community activity and life. The guidance also sets out information requirements in relation to the Welsh language to accompany planning applications not on allocated sites or within housing development boundaries. For smaller developments, applicants are asked to submit a 'Community and Linguistic Statement' to accompany their planning application. Smaller developments in this case are regarded as proposals for 5 or more residential units on a site/land that has not been designated in the development plan for residential use; a commercial, industrial or tourist development with an area of 1000m^2 or more; a development which is likely to lead to the loss of community facilities or employment opportunities and a tourism development creating ten or more holiday units. It is not intended that the provision of a statement should be onerous on a developer. Many aspects of the statement will be covered in Design and Access Statements and a further expansion of the Design and Access Statement to incorporate the requirements for a linguistic statement as explained in Supplementary Planning Guidance would be acceptable. For larger scale developments, the planning authority requires more detailed analysis of potential impacts which will be submitted in the form of a 'Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment'. In this case larger developments are regarded as proposals which are substantially above the thresholds of a smaller development and are likely to be located on unallocated sites, have some significance beyond the National Park boundary and possibly be unrelated to specific policies in the Plan. Their potential impact on communities will not have been considered as part of the Plan preparation process and will therefore need a more detailed linguistic assessment to ensure a proper appraisal. Where there are likely to be severe linguistic impacts which will adversely affect the numbers of Welsh speakers in the Community, the Authority will consider refusing a proposal for this reason alone.

5.48 The National Park Authority, working with partners is also committed to encouraging locally available community facilities and services which contribute to the vibrancy of the community, to the wellbeing of the language and to supporting initiatives that strengthen community cohesion and empowerment.

5.49 Signs can have a very visible impact on the character of Snowdonia, including its linguistic character. Signs are a method of promoting the distinctive culture of Snowdonia, and can contribute enormously to the Sense of Place which is of significance both to the identity of individual communities as well as the tourism industry.



Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau ©Visit Wales

Development Policy 18: The Welsh language and the Social and Cultural fabric of communities (18)

In determining all planning applications within the National Park the needs and interests of the Welsh Language will be taken into account. This will be achieved through:

i. Supporting development which maintains or enhances the integrity of the Welsh language.

ii. Refusing development which, due to its size, scale or its location, would cause significant harm to the character and language balance of a community. To be able to make an informed decision on applications that may have an effect on the future of the Welsh language within communities, applicants will be required to submit a:

   a) 'Community and Linguistic Statement' to accompany a planning application for unanticipated windfall sites of 5 or more residential units; a commercial, industrial or tourist development with an area of 1000m^2 or more; a development which is likely to lead to the loss of community facilities or employment opportunities and a tourism development creating ten or more holiday units.

   b) More detailed assessment in the form of a 'Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment' to accompany a planning application where developments are on a larger scale. Larger developments in this case are regarded as proposals which are substantially above the thresholds outlined in criterion (a) and are likely to be located on unallocated sites, have some significance beyond the National Park boundary and be unrelated to specific policies in the Plan.

iii. Mitigating against any adverse effect through requiring, in appropriate circumstances a financial contribution through a Section 106 agreement.

iv. Encouraging all signage by public bodies and by commercial and business companies to be bilingual or in Welsh only to protect and promote the distinctive cultural amenity of the National Park.

v. Encouraging the use of Welsh place names for new developments, house and street names.

Snowdonia Enterprise Zone - Llanbedr Airfield

6.26 The Welsh Government Designation at Llanbedr Airfield extends to 227.8 hectare (562 acre) Llanbedr Airfield. Now re-branded as the Snowdonia Aerospace Centre, the site was a former Ministry of Defence owned site. The airfield has three runways of 2.3km, 1.4km and 1.3km providing access to 7,100km² of segregated airspace over Cardigan Bay. The simultaneous access by both civil and military systems to this significant area of segregated airspace is unique to any airfield in the UK and is the first of its kind in Europe.

6.27 For clarity and consistency, the LDP allocation for Llanbedr shows an indicative focus area where development should be directed, the area is approximately 12.7 hectares (31 acres) and this area falls outside the area identified as flood risk. A larger area has also been identified on the maps which corresponds with the Welsh Government SEZ designation, here development associated within the uses proposed for the site will be considered on a case by case basis in line with the requirements of the policy. The Authority recognises that there will be a need for small scale new development within the wider site for operational and safety reasons, but development should first be directed towards the indicative focus area within the Enterprise Zone Allocation as shown on the proposals map. The National Park Authority expects to work closely with the site owners to develop an outline masterplan to guide new development on the site, before any significant development commences on the site. New development proposals will be subject to the criteria provided in Development Policy 27. Delivery of new uses on the site is anticipated during the first 10 years of the plan period – this will be monitored as part of the regular plan review process.

6.28 The Authority would support any appropriate development on either site which leads to employment opportunities that would sustain and enhance a mix of skills in the local work force. Therefore, it is important that any potential employment opportunities on the site are fully explored providing they conform with the outline masterplans for the sites and to the requirements of the policies within the ELDP.

Development Policy 27: Snowdonia Enterprise Zone

A landscape led outline Masterplan will need to be produced for both Llanbedr and Trawsfynydd sites and agreed with the Authority. The Masterplan will contain a development brief, a design statement, and a schedule identifying the phasing of development and associated infrastructure improvements required for each stage, before any development commences.

The outline masterplan will need to be supported by a landscape and visual impact assessment and demonstrate how the siting, scale, design and character of the development will minimise adverse effects upon the landscape character, visual amenity, natural environment and cultural heritage of the National Park.

A. Proposals for development in line with Parts B and C of this policy will be supported within the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone provided the following criteria are met:

i. The design is coherent and of high standard responds positively to the sensitive landscape and visual setting and Special Qualities of the National Park.

ii. The siting, height, form and scale materials and use of colour within the development assists its landscape integration and minimises significant adverse effects upon the landscape character and visual amenity.

iii. Development proposals have been considered in view of the requirements of the Habitats Regulations and found to be compliant.

iv. Development on either site is in line with an agreed outline masterplan for that site.

v. The employment development maximises the use of the existing local workforce.

vi. Development on either site does not have and unacceptable impact on the dark skies reserve.

B. Llanbedr

Within the Enterprise Zone Designation at Llanbedr identified on the proposals maps the following uses will be accepted:

- operations and uses associated with the aviation and aerospace industry, including those associated with airfield infrastructure and services and airspace management;
- new uses including employment use (B1, B2, B8) and other uses associated with research and development (including aviation and aerospace industries);
- employment-related training and education purposes;
- other uses ancillary to the uses identified above including accommodation, catering and leisure.

Development proposals should be directed towards the indicative focus area. Where development is proposed outside this area, the following criteria should be met:

- detailed proposals will need to demonstrate that the proposed development incorporates appropriate and acceptable flood risk mitigation measures agreed with NRW;
- there are no unacceptable significant effects on the landscape or visual amenity;
- sufficient evidence has been provided that the site demonstrates the least impact upon the landscape, visual amenity, environmental and cultural heritage;
- the development is not located in an area which will prevent the use of the main runway;
- the development should not adversely affect the integrity of European designated sites ;
- sufficient evidence has been provided to justify why the development cannot be located in the indicative focus area.

C. Trawsfynydd

Within or immediately adjacent to the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone allocation at Trawsfynydd, the following uses will be accepted:

- works and uses associated with nuclear decommissioning;
- new uses including B1, B2, B8 and other uses associated with digital/ICT businesses;
- low carbon energy businesses and energy generation technologies;
- Research and Development (related to ICT, Energy & Environmental sectors), and;
- employment-related training and education purposes.

Should proposed development fall under the definition of major development it will be considered against Strategic Policy B: Major Development by the Authority.

7. Promoting Accessibility and Inclusion

7.1 This section delivers a response to the following objectives:

Encourage new development to locations that reduce the need to travel with reasonable access to community services and facilities and sustainable modes of transport.

Support initiatives aimed at encouraging use of sustainable modes of transport.

Accessibility and Transport

7.2 Transport plays an integral role in many aspects of daily life. It creates opportunities for people to access jobs, services, education, health, leisure and social activities and connects businesses and products to markets. Improving transport provision is an important way of delivering economic, social and environmental objectives and enhancing quality of life. The Authority encourages a pattern for travel which gives primacy to walking and cycling for short distance journeys, bus or train for longer distances, with private car travel regarded as the least best option; in instances where car travel is unavoidable, the Authority advocates car sharing to minimise environmental impacts. To achieve the aim of promoting sustainable travel, this plan encourages development in areas that are easily accessible by sustainable forms of transport, therefore enabling people to get out of their cars and walk, cycle or use public transport to go about their daily lives.

7.3 Emissions generated by private travel account for a significant proportion of climate altering emissions nationally. To this end the Wales Spatial Plan aims to address the issue through reducing the need to travel; where appropriate, the Authority will support these aims; especially with regard to walking and cycling which provide health benefits as well as environmental positives. Co-location of jobs, housing and services are also vital in reducing the need for travel. However, it is not possible for the Authority to deliver these aims in isolation; it will work with other agencies that provide local services in addition to the highway authorities.

7.4 Meeting the travel and transport needs of local people and the business community in Snowdonia is a considerable challenge. Settlements and communities within Snowdonia are dispersed and the populations are small. The geography, and topography of Snowdonia along with the dispersed availability of employment opportunities means there has been a high reliance on private methods of transport over the years. Promoting public transport can improve accessibility to services in rural areas amongst people who do not own cars. However, due to this largely rural landscape, reliance on private car use will not be easy to change in the short term, but land use planning can help to reduce the need for excessive private car use by locating new development in sustainable locations. An effective public transport network will also support the economic aspiration of the wider region through facilitating employees commuting and reducing the impact of rising fuel costs upon the workforce. Transport assessments are an important mechanism for setting out the scale and the anticipated impact of travel from new development. They are usually required for larger proposals as stipulated in Planning Policy Wales but which are not likely to occur in the National Park. However in accordance with national policy the Authority will consider asking for a transport assessment in locally sensitive areas for smaller proposals which are likely to have significant travel implications at a local level.

7.5 As in other areas, road safety is an important consideration for the Authority, and the periodic exclusion of traffic from town centres such as Dolgellau, will be encouraged; especially where the safety of pedestrians will be improved alongside improvements in vehicle movement and parking facilities. Such measures could also enhance the character and amenity of settlements as places to live, work, shop, and visit. The Authority will use their powers to make Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) where it has been established that it is necessary and that inappropriate use is being made of certain green lanes or other roads. Where road improvements are proposed primacy should be given to aesthetic impacts of highways, whilst improving the alignment and appearance. Any highway improvements should be done in a manner that does not adversely affect Snowdonia's 'Special Qualities'. Recent highway improvements carried out in the National Park have provided a blue-print of best practice for other areas and been awarded national accolades. The Authority will encourage relevant highway authorities to adopt design guides that recognise the importance of high environmental standards. Many rural roads in the National Park are narrow and used by walkers, cyclists and riders as well as vehicles. The National Park Authority will also work with the highway authority to seek to resolve conflicts and one consideration may be adjusting road speed limits where possible and appropriate.

7.6 Strategic management and development of transport matters are controlled by the Welsh Government and local highway authorities. On a local level these are now being co-ordinated by partnerships of all authorities. The National Park straddles an area covered by two Joint Local Transport Plans (Mid Wales JLTP and North Wales JLTP). Where appropriate, the Authority will support the aims and objectives of both Transport Plans.

7.7 The use of disused railway lines and other linear routes, provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding as alternative modes of transport, for commuting and recreation, in a safe manner away from highway traffic. The locations of recreational routes such as these are outlined on the proposals maps.

7.8 The Snowdonia Green Key Initiative focuses on sustainable transport networks and traffic capacity issues within the National Park. It aims to improve the frequency and quality of the service, as well as helping achieve the strategic aim of encouraging people to use public transport. A greatly enhanced bus service also benefits local people, who have access to an urban standard of frequency and reliability. The Snowdon Sherpa service is part of this initiative and provides transport from a number of locations from both within and outside of the park. The Authority intends to continue its involvement with the initiative. Future efforts must ensure better integration with public transport networks in the region to provide a viable, convenient and integrated alternative transport option.

7.9 The National Park will also support the use of the mainline railways that run through the park for freight movement as this could help to reduce the number of goods vehicles on the highway. It will also support the increased use of the railways for public transportation.

Strategic Policy L: Accessibility and Transport (L)

The National Park Authority is committed to improving access to local facilities and reduce the need to travel especially by private car. Within the National Park walking and cycling, improved access to public transport and provision of facilities will be encouraged.

Development will be supported where:

i. The provision of services are located so as to minimise the need to travel.

ii. There is convenient access via footpaths, cycle paths and public transport, thereby encouraging the use of these modes of travel for local journeys, reducing the need to travel by private car and improving the accessibility of services to those with poor availability of transport.

iii. There is an improvement in accessibility for all, in particular disabled people.

iv. Changes to the road network do not damage or cause detrimental effects to ProW, listed buildings or historic monuments or cause adverse effects to environmental designations. The highest priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the characteristic biodiversity of Snowdonia, particularly habitats and species designated under national and European legislation. Where possible, these improvements to the road network will feature provision for segregated pedestrian and cycling uses.

v. It will reduce or remove vehicle traffic from within town centres and where possible from rural areas.

vi. The natural environment of the park is not adversely affected.

vii. Secure cycle parking facilities are provided where appropriate.

The National Park Authority will continue to support appropriate sustainable transport and community transport initiatives.

The recreational routes identified on the proposals map will be safeguarded from development which would prevent their use as recreational routes.

The track bed of the Corris Railway within the National Park will be safeguarded from other forms of development so that it may be reinstated as a railway.

That part of the disused railway which runs from Trawsfynydd to Blaenau Ffestiniog which is within the National Park will be safeguarded from inappropriate development which would prevent the future use of the railway line as a transport corridor.

Visitor Car Parking

7.10 The provision of car parks within the National Park is considered by the Authority to be adequate for the needs of the public. Car parks are provided by the National Park Authority and other Local Authorities in coastal, urban and mountain locations facilitating public access by private transport to these areas. Increasing the supply of car parking spaces in the face of concentrated seasonal and weekend demand is neither practical nor a sustainable use of land or an effective visitor management solution, especially viewed against the Authority's objective of reducing dependency on the use of private motor vehicles. The Authority recognises that coach travel is an environmentally friendly more efficient and cheaper form of transport than private motor cars.

7.11 The creation or extension of permanent visitor car parks on appropriate sites in Dolgellau and Bala will be permitted by the Authority where there is a demonstrated need for further parking spaces. The temporary use of land for seasonal visitor car parking within or on the edge of popular villages will be permitted as long as it is not harmful to residential amenity or road access. The Authority will support the creation of new or expanded car parks only where they form an integral part of a traffic management initiative designed to reduce the impact of cars and car parking on the environment. The creation or expansion of any car park should not be harmful to residential amenity or road access and be consistent with National Park purposes and the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park.



ERYRI LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2016 – 2031

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