

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 08/12/2025
ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT REPORT	

**Number: 2**

**Application Number:** C25/0625/39/LL

**Date Registered:** 05/09/25

**Application Type:** Full

**Community:** Llanengan

**Ward:** Abersoch and Llanengan

**Proposal:** A resubmission with improvements of a previously refused full application for a caravan site, to include a toilet block and environmental improvements

**Location:** Berth Ddu Caravan Park, Bwlchtocyn, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 7BY

**Summary of the Recommendation:** TO REFUSE

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## 1 Description:

- 1.1 This is a resubmission of a previously refused full application for a touring caravan site, as well as erecting a toilet block and landscaping work. It is proposed to create 13 plots for touring caravans, erect a permanent building to include toilets/showers, as well as undertaking soft landscaping improvements by reinforcing and filling gaps in *cloddiau* and hedges, as well as planting a new hedge on the verge of the site with the nearby public road.
- 1.2 The main changes made between the previous refused application (C25/0008/39/LL) and the current application would be:
  - Reduce the number of plots from 15 to 13
  - Plant a new hedge
- 1.3 The site is located outside any development boundary as shown in the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan (LDP) Inset Maps; therefore the site is considered as open countryside. The Berth Ddu property itself stands to the south of the application site and there are dispersed residential houses within the local area. The site is within the Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within the Llŷn and Enlli Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. The site is served by the relatively narrow and winding unclassified public road. The land that is the subject of this planning application is land graded as class 2 land, namely good quality agricultural land.
- 1.4 From the site's planning history, it appears that no planning permission exists (except for the previously refused planning application) to create a caravan site here. It is known that the location has operated as a "Caravan and Motorhome Club" certified site in the past. However, the existing site does not operate through the exempt Club as confirmed by the Club's representatives on 30/10/25. Therefore, it is believed that the current application is for a brand-new touring caravan site due to the lack of any planning permission in the past or any exemption certificate to operate a caravan site through these arrangements.
- 1.5 The application is submitted to the Planning Committee instead of being considered through the delegated procedure as the application is on a site measuring 0.5 hectare or more in size.

## 2. Relevant Policies:

- 2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Local Development Plan.
- 2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet the 7 well-being goals within the Act. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching the recommendation, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

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### 2.3 Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-26, adopted 31 July 2017

PS 1: The Welsh Language and Culture

TRA 2: Parking standards

TRA 4: Managing transport impacts

PS 6: Alleviating and adapting to the effects of climate change

PCYFF 1: Development boundaries

PCYFF 2: Development criteria

PCYFF 3: Design and place shaping

PCYFF 4: Design and landscaping

PS 14: The visitor economy

TWR 5: Touring caravan sites, camping sites and temporary alternative camping accommodation

AMG 1: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans

AMG 5: Local biodiversity conservation

AT 1: Conservation Areas, World Heritage Sites and Registered Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens.

Also relevant in this case are the following:

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Tourist Facilities and Accommodation

SPG: Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities

### 2.4 National Policies:

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12 - February 2024)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13: Tourism

TAN 18: Transportation

TAN 12: Design

TAN 5: Planning and Nature Conservation

TAN 6: Planning for sustainable rural communities

TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language

TAN 23: Economic development

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## TAN 15: Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion

### 3. Relevant Planning History:

- 3.1 Application C25/0008/39/LL - Increase the number of caravans to a total of 15 mobile units, construction of toilet/shower block, landscaping and associated work - Refused 14/07/25

### 4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Keep to the same observations submitted with the original case, namely to support, but concerned about the number of caravans in Bwlchtocyn.

Transportation Unit: Not received

Natural Resources Wales: We do not oppose to the proposed development as submitted and we provide standard advice relating to matters, including landscape and protected species.

Welsh Water: We refer to your planning consultation relating to the above site, and we can provide the following comments in respect to the proposed development.

Firstly, with respect to the submitted application form and accompanying plans, we acknowledge that the development proposes to discharge foul and surface water flows to a public sewer and soakaway respectively.

#### FOUL WATER

The proposed development site is located in the catchment of a public sewerage system which drains to Abersoch Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW). We have considered the impact of foul flows generated by the proposed development and concluded it is unlikely that sufficient capacity exists to accommodate the development within the immediate public sewerage system without causing detriment to the existing services we provide to our customers, or in regard to the protection of the environment.

Having reviewed the revised Proposed Site Plan, we note it is proposed to re-direct surface water drains from existing buildings

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from public sewer to new soakaway crate system. However, additional information is required in order to assess whether this would sufficiently offset the new foul flows from the development.

## SURFACE WATER

Turning to surface water drainage, as of 7th January 2019, this proposed development may be subject to Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. In the event this proposed development amounts to a total impermeable area of 100sqm or more, approval of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features will be required in accordance with the 'Statutory standards for sustainable drainage systems – designing, constructing, operating and maintaining surface water drainage systems'. In this instance, we offer no objection to proposals for disposal of surface water flows into a soakaway, in principle, subject to consultation and agreement with the regulatory body or riparian owner of this system.

## ASSET PROTECTION

In addition, this site is crossed by a public pressurised main with the approximate position(s) being marked on the attached statutory public watermain record. In accordance with the Water Industry Act 1991, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water requires access to its apparatus at all times in order to carry out maintenance and repairs. Having regard to the revised Proposed Site Plan, it appears the a new hedge row would be situated above and within the protection zone of the public asset measured 3 metres either side of the centreline. Please note, the distance specified for this protection zone is indicative and based on industry standard guidelines. However, the depth of the asset will need to be verified on site which may infer a greater protection zone. For completeness, we recommend the developer refer to their title deeds to confirm if there are any covenants or restrictions associated with the asset(s) crossing the proposed development site.

We would advise that it is not permissible to locate any building, structure, trees, SuDS features, ecological mitigation or the raising or lowering of ground levels above or within the protection zone of our assets.

In this instance, it appears there is sufficient space and scope to re-position the hedge outside the protection zone of the asset. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the proposed site plan is amended to take into account the location of the asset crossing the site and we respectfully request we are re-consulted on receipt of this information.

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It is also recommended that the developer contact our

Plan and Protect team (PlanandProtect@dwrcymru.com) to carry out a survey to verify the location of the asset and establish its relationship to the proposed development.

### Conclusion

Accordingly, for the reasons outlined above, we offer a Holding Objection until such time as additional/amended information has been submitted and request we are re-consulted on receipt of this information.

Our response is based on the information provided by your application. Should the proposal alter during the course of the application process we kindly request that we are re-consulted and reserve the right to make new representation.

#### Biodiversity Unit:

The plans show that additional trees will be planted in existing hedges, as well as creating a wildflower meadow. There are no ecological concerns.

#### AONB Unit:

Berth Ddu caravan site is located in the Sarn Bach area and in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The land is visible from some nearby public vistas, but it is not very prominent in the landscape. This is an amended application to create a site for 13 units and a toilet/shower block on two agricultural fields. It is noted that there is a proposal to plant trees and create a new hedge on the southern boundary which would, in time, contribute towards biodiversity and screen the site.

Viewpoints are provided on touring caravans in the AONB in policy TP9 of the Management Plan, which notes: Resist new caravan developments and extensions to existing sites in prominent locations in the landscape or coast of the AONB and promote landscaping of existing sites. Overall, there is now a substantial number of touring caravans in the community of Sarn Bach / Bwlchtocyn, which puts pressures on the local environment and services. It would be useful to undertake a survey to obtain detailed information about the number of caravans and to consider the ability of the area to cope with more units.

#### Licensing Unit:

Following any planning application permitted in relation to a caravan or camping site under the 1960 and 1936 Acts, the applicant would be required to make an application for a site licence to the Licensing

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Service.

Language Unit: Not received

Fire Service: The Fire Authority has no observations regarding the access for Fire vehicles and water supply.

Land Drainage Unit: It is clear that the toilet block will be 47.74m<sup>2</sup>. However, it is unclear whether there is any construction work in relation to the touring caravan plots. At the moment, we offer a temporary objection until we receive confirmation on the point above. If construction work is required and the general construction area of the development is equivalent to or larger than 100m<sup>2</sup>, a drainage statement will be required, with evidence.

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertisement period has expired, and two letters / items of correspondence have been received, objecting on the following grounds:

- Although there are changes from the previous application and improvements in the form of suitable landscaping and Biodiversity improvements, they are cosmetic changes and do nothing to prevent the visual impact of this open site within the AONB;
- transport concerns and poor access to the site;
- lack of capacity within the area to accept an increase in caravans;
- concerns about the permanent presence of touring caravans on sites, which is contrary to policy;
- work has already been undertaken without Planning permission.

## 5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

### The principle of the development and visual amenities

5.1 It is acknowledged that the site has operated as a site with an exempt certificate in the past. This means that such a site can be operated by installing up to 5 touring units. If the site was used by numbers above 5 at any time, then this was unauthorised use. As noted, an exempt certificate does not exist on the site by now and it is therefore considered, due to the lack of any formal planning permission to use the land as a caravan site, it must be considered as a new site and as this is a site relating to touring caravans, the application must be considered mainly under the requirements of policy TWR 5 of the LDP, which sets a series of criteria to approve such developments.

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- 5.2 Criterion 1 in policy TWR 5 states that any new touring caravan development should be of a high quality in terms of design, layout and appearance, and well screened by existing landscape features and/or where the units can be readily assimilated into the landscape in a way which does not significantly harm the visual quality of the landscape.
- 5.3 It is intended to locate up to 13 touring caravans and erect a permanent building to be used as toilets/showers on the site. It is acknowledged that some trees and hedges are present on the site, but it is not considered that the quality of the landscaping on the site's boundaries or verges manage to fully protect the site's visual amenities. Given the site's elevated and open location, there is no assurance that the landscaping would establish itself and it is emphasised that it would take many years to adequately screen the site, if at all. A reliance on landscaping to create a sufficient screen includes an element of risk and there is doubt as to whether it would be possible to ensure adequate screening in the short-term. Criterion 1 is clear in the fact that it is requested that sites in non-intrusive sites have been well concealed by the existing features of the landscape and / or in a place where the touring units can be easily assimilated into the landscape. In this case, the site is not well concealed by the existing features of the landscape, and there is no assurance that the mitigation measures to improve the screening would establish or succeed to a degree to conceal and assimilate the units effectively into the landscape. It is also noted that Welsh Water has objected based on locating the hedge along the site's boundary as it would likely be within 3m of the watermain that runs along the boundary. There would therefore be a need to consider moving this hedge and there is no assurance that its new location would blend in with the current landscape or create effective screening. Therefore, the proposal does not meet the requirements of criterion 1 of policy TWR 5 of the LDP.
- 5.4 It is believed that the presence of caravans on the site would be visible from the nearby public road, as well as from the relatively close public footpath to the west of the site. Due to the level nature of the land, it can be argued that the views will be restricted from nearby plots, however it would be visible from the nearby road and from higher lands within the dispersed area of Bwlchtocyn, including areas along the area's public footpaths. It is acknowledged that there is an intention to reinforce the site screening by improving and adding landscaping to existing *cloddiau*, however, although the existing *cloddiau* would screen the lowest parts of the units, due to the height of the touring caravans, it is believed that they would be visible in the broader landscape. Due to the difference between its use in the past and the proposed use, the site would be more prominent within the landscape. The amenity building and ancillary relics that come because of caravan site use, such as parking vehicles, play equipment, etc., highlights the presence of the site and is therefore unlikely to contribute positively to the AONB landscape. The village of Bwlchtocyn is generally in a high area and is prominent where there is high density of historic touring and static caravan sites. There is concern that approving another touring site in the area would harm the visual amenities of the area which is known for its outstanding natural beauty.
- 5.5 Policy AMG 1 notes that proposals that are within or affect the setting/views into or out of the AONB, will need to consider the AONB Management Plan. Despite not fully objecting to the proposal, the AONB unit's comments note *"Viewpoints are provided on touring caravans in the AONB in policy TP9 of the Management Plan, which notes: Resist new caravan developments and extensions to existing sites in prominent locations in the landscape or coast of the AONB and promote landscaping of existing sites... There is now a substantial number of touring caravans in the community of Sarn Bach / Bwlchtocyn, which puts pressures on the local environment and services."*

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- 5.6 Paragraph 6.3.81 of the explanation of policy TWR 5 notes: *"There are areas that are under extreme pressure in a number of communities located near the coast, including large parts of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Council will need strong evidence that proposals for more accommodation units in such areas will not add to problems for services and will not harm the natural character or resources of these areas."* The Local Planning Authority has a duty to protect the interests of the AONB. No evidence was presented to prove that the proposal would not add to problems for services, and we are not convinced that establishing a new touring caravan site in such a sensitive site would make a positive contribution to the views and visual amenities of the landscape in this case. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to the requirements of policy AMG 1 of the LDP.
- 5.7 The second criteria of Policy TWR 5 asks to avoid excessive areas of hard standing. In this case, no hard standings are shown for the caravans, and therefore it is considered that this is acceptable. The third criterion requires assurance that the site would only accommodate touring units - this can be controlled with a suitable planning condition, should the decision be made to approve the application. There is concern that the site would go from operating as an unnoticed exempt small site into a more formal site with a tendency in the vicinity to site touring caravans every season. The fourth criterion requires assurance that any ancillary facilities should be located in an existing building if possible, or should this not be possible, that they are commensurate to the scale of the development. There will be a new modern toilet/shower facility block measuring approximately 12.73m x 3.75m with internal provision for disabled users. The roof will be covered with slate which will be in keeping with other building roofs and the colour of the render walls has not been detailed. It is believed that the size of the block is equivalent to the scale of the development and satisfies the fourth criteria of criterion TWR 5. In terms of the fifth criterion, the policy requires the site to be located close to the main roads network and that adequate access can be provided without significantly harming landscape characteristics and features - highway matters are discussed below. The sixth criterion requires assurance that occupancy is restricted to holiday use only - this can be ensured with a suitable planning condition. The seventh, and the last of the criteria, requires assurance that the site is used for touring purposes only and that the units are removed from the site during periods when not in use - again, this is a matter of imposing a suitable planning condition. Although the proposal meets some of the criteria of policy TWR 5 of the LDP, it is considered that the proposal fails on the main criterion which requires that the development is in a non-intrusive location which is already well concealed.

#### **General and residential amenities**

- 5.8 The Berth Ddu dwelling itself is part of the site, but the nearest houses are a field or more away from the application site. It is not considered that the site would likely have a significant impact on the nearby residential dwellings. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal would likely cause obvious significant harm to the amenities of the local neighbourhood and residents and the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of Policy PCYFF 2 of the LDP.

#### **Transport and access matters**

- 5.9 It is intended to use the existing access to serve the development. It is noted that the access track to the land has already been resurfaced with fine slate waste and work to widen the access has been completed. Widening the access has improved visibility to the road, which is considered satisfactory. The site plan shows parking spaces adjacent to the caravans, with more room for more vehicles if needed. No observations were received from the Transportation Unit at the time of writing this report, but it is known from observations presented with the previous application, that

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there was no objection to the proposal at the time. On these grounds, it is accepted that the proposal satisfies the requirements of policies TRA 2 and TRA 4 of the LDP.

- 5.10 It is noted however that criterion 5 of policy TWR 5 requires that touring sites are close to the main roads network and that an adequate access can be provided without substantially disrupting the features and character of the landscape, with Supplementary Planning Guidance: Tourist Facilities and Accommodation noting in paragraph 6.3.1 *"It is important that new sites are located as near as possible to the main highways network (i.e. class A and B). Unclassified country roads are usually single-track lanes and are considered unsuitable for heavy traffic. No proposal will be supported when the Authority is of the view that it has not been located close to the main highway network."* The nearest classified road (class 3) abuts the village of Sarn Bach approximately 1.37km from the application site. A narrow unclassified rural road with hidden and winding corners serving the Bwlchtocyn area and there is concern about approving more touring sites where there is a high density of caravan sites as they are on a rural road where passing places are scarce. Certainly, in such a location, visitors would use their own transport to transport a caravan to the site and overall are reliant on private transport to travel from day-to-day, as it is not possible to rely on regular public transport here. It can be argued that the Bwlchtocyn area, in particular in the holiday season, has reached a saturation point where no more towing vehicle traffic should be encouraged on the road, which is mainly single-lane. Due to the nature of the road and its distance from a classified road and the adaptations to the access, it is not believed that the proposal meets criterion 5 of policy TWR 5 of the LDP.

#### **Biodiversity matters**

- 5.11 A Green Infrastructure Statement was submitted as part of the application that outlines biodiversity enhancements through additional landscaping measures in the form of planting hedges and trees, as well as the installation of a bat box and a bird nesting box on the gable ends of the toilets building and creating a wildflower meadow. The Biodiversity Unit confirmed that these improvements are acceptable in this case and there is no ecological concern regarding the proposal. It is noted that Welsh Water has objected to the location of the hedge along the site's boundary, and although there are concerns over moving the hedge in terms of its efficiency to screen the development and its visual impact (see paragraph 5.3 above), it is considered that it could be possible to ensure further biodiversity improvements through a planning condition should the proposal be acceptable in principle. It is therefore considered that the proposal meets the relevant requirements of policy AMG 5, together with the requirements of chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales relating to green infrastructure and the phased approach.

#### **Linguistic matters**

- 5.12 It is noted that there are some specific types of developments where it will be required for the proposal to submit a Welsh Language Statement or a Welsh Language Impact Assessment. The thresholds when it is expected to submit a Statement/Report have been highlighted in Policy PS1 of the JLDP as well as Diagram 5 of the SPG Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities (SPG). The development in question does not meet any of the thresholds in Policy PS 1 of the LDP.
- 5.13 Excluding the developments that meet the thresholds for submitting a Welsh Language Impact Statement / Assessment noted in Policy PS1, guidance is provided in terms of the type of relevant applications where it is needed to consider the Welsh language in Appendix 5 (The Screening Procedure) of the SPG (sections Ch to Dd). The guidance included within Appendix 5 notes that every retail, commercial or industrial development where there is no need to submit a Welsh

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Language Impact Statement / Assessment should show how consideration has been given to the language.

- 5.14 In this case, a Welsh Language Statement was provided to support the proposal. The statement notes that the site will only generally be used for holiday use during the summer period, with the development contributing directly and indirectly towards the rural economy as visitors spend in local pubs, restaurant and shops. The development would mean a significant investment from the applicant with local providers and contractors benefiting from that. It is anticipated that the development would need one part-time worker to run the caravan site, and it would keep the original Welsh name of Berth Ddu with all the signs on the site bilingual. It is therefore believed that some consideration has been given to the Welsh language in accordance with the principles of policy PS1 of the LDP.

### **Drainage Matters/Infrastructure**

- 5.15 Observations were received from Welsh Water on concerns regarding the development and they object to the proposal. The development is located within the catchment area of the sewerage system which drains to the Abersoch Water Waste Treatment Works. Welsh Water state that it is unlikely that there will be adequate capacity within the public sewerage system without causing harm to customer services and relating to safeguarding the environment. Without appropriate information to fully assess the proposal, it cannot be assumed that suitable arrangements would be in place to address waste from the site, it is therefore not believed that the submitted application is acceptable based on the relevant requirements of policy ISA 1 which note that proposals are only approved when sufficient infrastructure capacity exists.
- 5.16 It is also noted that the Council's Land Drainage Unit offers a temporary objection to receive confirmation whether there is an intention to provide hard standings for touring units. The application does not confirm that there is an intention to provide hard standings, and therefore, to this end, it is not considered that the proposal provides a hard standing or a building over the threshold of 100m square which means that there would be a need to submit a drainage statement. It is noted that hard standings require their own planning permission and therefore, should the proposal be acceptable, it would be possible to provide hard standing through a separate planning application. To this end, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of Technical Advice Note 15: Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion (2025).

### **Any other considerations**

- 5.17 According to the current Welsh Government maps, the land that forms the application site is known as registered land 2. Paragraph 3.58 of Planning Policy Wales states that "*agricultural land of grade 3a, as well as classes 1 and 2, in the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)16 is deemed as the best and most versatile and should be conserved as a finite resource for the future.*" As was the case with the previously refused application, no evidence has been submitted as part of the application to justify the loss of quality 2 land and therefore, the proposal is considered contrary to criterion 6 of policy PCYFF 6, which requests that the best agricultural land is safeguarded, as well as part 3.58 of Planning Policy Wales.

### **Response to the public consultation**

- 5.18 It is acknowledged that objections have been received to this proposal, and we consider that all relevant planning matters have been duly addressed as part of the above assessment. The recommendation is made based on a full assessment of all relevant planning considerations,

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including all the observations received during the public consultation, and nobody was wronged in any way when considering this application.

## **6. Conclusions:**

- 6.1 Having considered the above and the requirements of all the relevant local and national policies and guidance, as well as all the observations received, it is not believed that the plan as submitted is acceptable as it does not comply with the requirements of relevant local and national planning policies and guidelines as set out in the report.

## **7. Recommendation:**

### **7.1 To refuse – reasons**

1. The proposal involves the creation of a new touring caravan site in open countryside away from the main road network. It is not considered that the proposed units would easily assimilate to the local landscape, and it is not considered as an unobtrusive location that was well-concealed by the existing features of the landscape, and it is therefore considered that the development would be harmful to the visual quality of the landscape. The proposal would not add to the maintenance, enhancement or restoration of the recognised character of the Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and creating a new caravan site some distance from the main public road network on a busy rural road where there is a high density of holiday sites would have an impact on the features and character of the area. It is therefore considered that the proposal is contrary to the relevant requirements of policies TWR 5 and AMG 1 of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan and the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Tourist Facilities and Accommodation.
2. Insufficient evidence had been presented as part of the planning application to demonstrate that full account had been given to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. It is therefore considered to be contrary to the requirements of criteria 6 of Policy PS 6 of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 and advice provided in paragraphs 3.58 and 3.59 of Planning Policy Wales.
3. Due to lack of information to fully assess the impact of the new sewerage flow from the proposed development, the proposal is unacceptable based on the requirements of policy ISA1 which notes that proposals are only approved if sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or when it is provided in a timely manner.