

# 4G Project:

# Request for Information

Ambition North Wales and Growing Mid Wales

Reference: RFI-4G-KR01

September 2024



## Introduction

The Connected Key Sites and Corridors project forms part of the North Wales Growth Deal's Digital Connectivity Programme, with the Growing Mid Wales Mobile Coverage & Capacity Project being developed through its equivalent Digital Programme.

Both programmes, within in their respective regions will:

- address digital connectivity challenges - to unlock opportunities and build on our strengths.
- enhance capability to develop technologies for the future - ensuring that the increasing demand for digital can be met and benefits from fast, high-quality connectivity are realised.

Telecommunications remain a reserved power, with the UK Government's Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) having primary responsibility for setting targets and policy upon provision across the UK. The objective for both programmes is to compliment publicly and commercially funded deployments, providing additionality across North and Mid Wales within strategic priority locations.

For 4G, the government aims for 95% coverage by 2025 as part of the [Shared Rural Network](#) (SRN) agreement, with this target restated in the 2023 [Wireless Infrastructure Strategy](#). At this time the DSIT has not confirmed which specific areas fall within the 5% of the UK that will not receive 4G connectivity, though they are expected to be extremely rural.

**Ambition North Wales'** Connected Key Sites and Corridors project aims to improve the availability of mobile voice and data services and full-fibre broadband services to key commercial sites across the region.

**Growing Mid Wales'** Mobile Coverage and Capacity project focuses predominantly upon mobile voice and data provision across the region.

**Both projects** aim to deliver 4G coverage across North and Mid Wales from all four Mobile Network Operators (MNOs). This includes indoor, outdoor and in-vehicle at key locations along transport corridors and at business and tourism sites.

## Purpose of this request for information

This request for information seeks to define the proposed intervention locations in the first phase of the projects.

To enable this, a series of initial locations have been identified for potential investment to improve mobile data and voice services- building upon information and data currently available to Ambition North Wales and Growing Mid Wales.

Delivering mobile services in non-commercial areas of North and Mid Wales brings significant technical and commercial challenges. This request for information phase aims to test the market's interest in delivering 4G mobile infrastructure and services.

Both Ambition North Wales and Growing Mid Wales will continue to work with industry and the regulator Ofcom to identify and verify areas of poor 4G coverage and consider how these could potentially be addressed through this or future phases of activity.

# Approach

To ensure the success of future investment, we will actively engage and consult with relevant parties - gathering feedback and analysing results. The insights gained will identify priorities and inform our planning.

## Principles

Our engagement activities will adhere to the following principles:

- **Proportionality:** The engagement will be proportionate to the group being consulted.
- **Transparency and Focus:** We will maintain openness and transparency, clearly communicating how the views gathered will be used and what they may influence.
- **Consistency and Personalisation:** Our engagement will be consistent and joined up, ensuring no group has undue influence or access. We will tailor our engagement to the commitments and interests of the audience.
- **Promotion of improvement:** We will share our findings with key regional and national stakeholders to promote improvement.
- **Accountability:** We will use the necessary resources and time to make a difference and properly evaluate findings.
- We will engage with interested parties at various levels, using appropriate methods and timings.

## Levels of Engagement

All our means of engagement will be designed to meet our clear objectives. We will tailor our engagement activities, use appropriate methods and consider the context from an external perspective.

Better mobile connectivity is recognised as a driver of GVA improvement and societal benefits. The benefits of better mobile coverage, as indicated by survey research and the UK government's assessment, include productivity growth, work safety and satisfaction, social and work quality benefits, reduced digital divide, improved quality of life and consumer savings.

These objectives align with the Mobile Connectivity Benefits Framework<sup>1</sup>, focusing on driving economic growth, enabling public sector efficiency, reducing the digital divide, providing public value, reducing environmental impact and stimulating the market.

To improve the coverage and quality of mobile networks Ambition North Wales and Growing Mid Wales are proposing interventions to:

- 'Address barriers' - working with the public sector and industry to remove barriers to investment, improving the rate and scale of deployment of mobile networks. Consideration is being given to the establishment of a regional forum of public sector and telecommunications industry representatives to support this activity.
- Improve access to public sector assets to support deployment of mobile networks, e.g. through the adoption of 'Open Access Agreements'.
- Support investment in public and private sector assets to improve the coverage of mobile networks.

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<sup>1</sup> [Benefits of Rural Mobile Coverage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614222/Benefits_of_Rural_Mobile_Coverage_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf)

## Geographical Scope

The request for information covers the counties of North and Mid Wales, as follows:

- Ceredigion
- Conwy
- Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Gwynedd
- Isle of Anglesey
- Powys
- Wrexham

## Timescale for request for information

This will run for 8 weeks from 16 September 2024 to 15 November 2024.

## Your Response Required

We are sending this request for information to all Mobile Network Operators, providers of mobile infrastructure and services and are notifying Local Authorities. The document is also on our website.

We welcome responses from any organisation or individual to the questions set out in **Annex C**.

When responding to these questions, please provide the following information:

- Your name
- Position (if applicable)
- Your organisation's name (if applicable)
- Your organisation's address (if applicable)
- Contact email address

Please send your response to arrive not later than 16:00 on 15 November 2024. You can respond via email to: [procurement@ambitionnorth.wales](mailto:procurement@ambitionnorth.wales) or in writing to:

Ambition North Wales & Growing Mid Wales 4G Request for Information  
Welsh Government Offices  
Sarn Mynach  
Llandudno Junction  
Conwy  
LL31 9RZ

Please clearly mark email / submission RFI – 4G – KR01 in subject line.

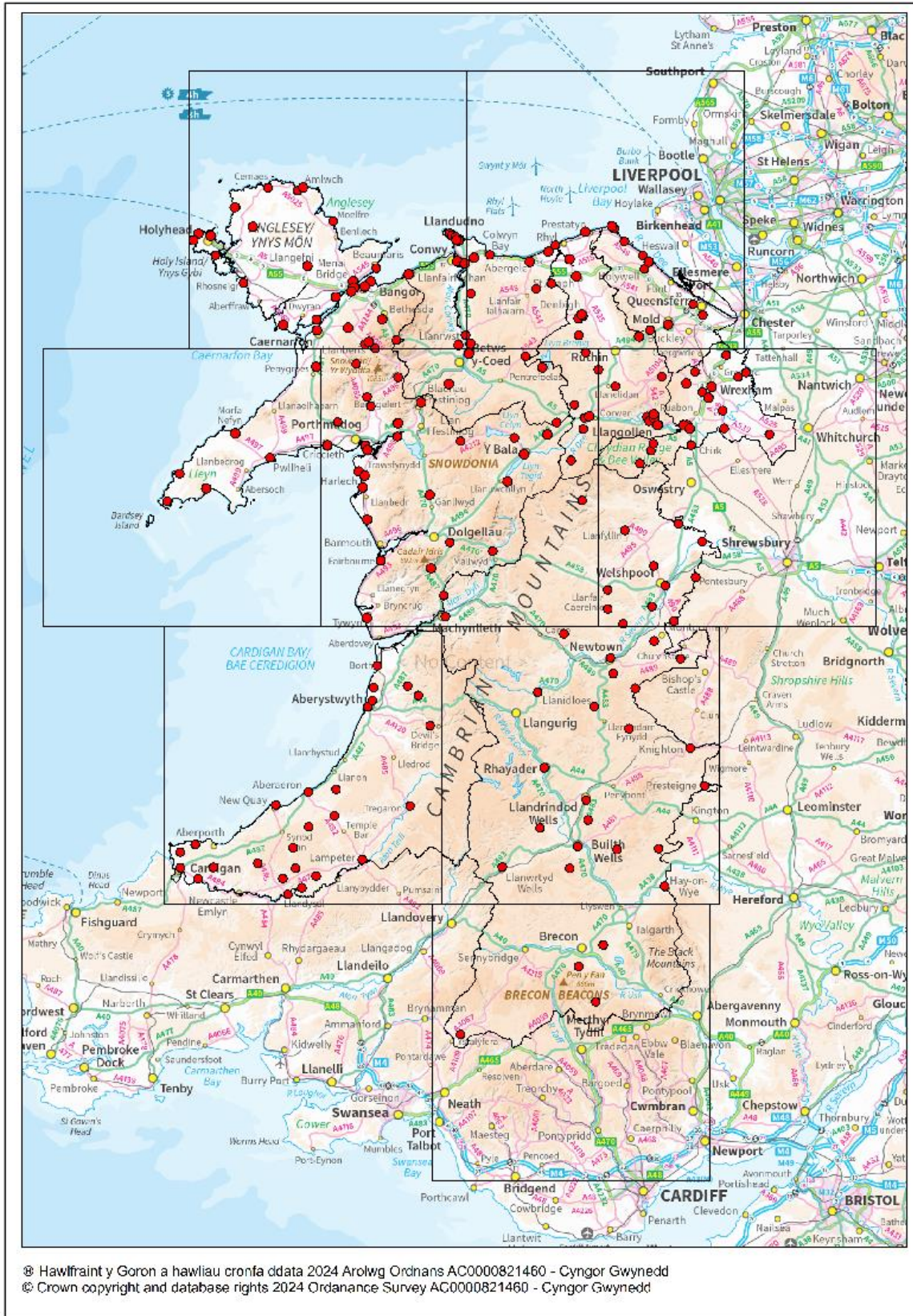
Please note that the data you provide in your response will be treated as commercially confidential to Ambition North Wales and Growing Mid Wales, though it may be necessary to share some or all of your response data with our professional advisors, UK Department for Digital, Science, Innovation and Technology, Welsh Government, BDUK and Ofcom. If you have any questions about any of the above information, please contact [procurement@ambitionnorth.wales](mailto:procurement@ambitionnorth.wales)

## Annex A – Approach to Engagement

Engagement Group	Plan	Engagement Method	Communication Method	When
Providers of mobile infrastructure/ services		Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Verbal messages</li> <li>• E-mail</li> </ul>	Within the request for information period
Other Interested Parties (including interested members of the public)		Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Verbal messages</li> <li>• E-mail</li> </ul>	Within the request for information period
Strategic Partners		Inform	Directed according to preference and proportionate to the significance of the issue	Within the request for information period

# Annex B – Map of Potential Areas of Interest

Map 1- Map indicating target areas for 4G investment (See next page)



## Annex C – Questions

The questions below are predominantly aimed at Mobile Network Operators and providers of mobile infrastructure and services, however interested members of the public are also encouraged to respond – particularly to question 4.

### 4G Deployment

- 1) Do you agree with the approach Ambition North Wales and Growing Mid Wales are proposing to address mobile connectivity challenges across the region i.e. Addressing barriers, Open Access Agreements, investment in public and private sector assets)?
- 2) If you are
  - a) a provider of mobile infrastructure services; or
  - b) a provider of mobile servicesdo you have any current or planned (next 3 years) investments associated with 4G Long-Term Evolution (LTE) or 5G in the target areas indicated on the map of North and Mid Wales? Please provide details.
- 3) If you are an interested party in relation to mobile infrastructure services, do you have any current or planned (next 3 years) investments in the target areas indicated on the map? Please provide details.
- 4) If you are a member of the public, are you aware of any current or planned mobile telecommunications investments in the target areas indicated on the map within the next three years? Additionally, do you know of any complete 4G mobile 'not spots' (defined as having no 4G network coverage from any mobile network operator)? Please provide details, and reference for the central point and any evidence demonstrating the lack of coverage, e.g. grid coordinates or 'What Three Words' reference
- 5) Do you agree with the initial locations that have been identified for potential investment to improve mobile data and voice services as shown in Annex B? If not, please suggest alternative sites and explain your reasoning.

### Working with industry

- 6) Do you see a benefit in establishing a Regional Telecoms Forum? If yes, how would recommend the forum operates (e.g. scope, frequency of meetings)? What are the key barriers you consider should be prioritised for intervention?

### Access to public assets

- 7) What are the key benefits of signing asset access agreements for public sector organisations? Additionally, what do you believe are the implications of not having such agreements in place?
- 8) Will having asset access agreements in place for the public sector accelerate the deployment of mobile network infrastructure in the region?

### Use of public assets

- 9) To what extent do you believe public sector sites should be utilised for improving digital connectivity?
- 10) If you intend to, or already use public sector assets in your network, please describe the scope of these assets (e.g. land, structures, rooftops, street furniture)?
- 11) Where you intend to, or already utilise public street columns, what are the minimum specifications for these to accommodate your network?

- 12) How can capital investment by the public sector incentivise the use of its assets (e.g. backhaul improvements, upgrading power supplies and structures etc)?
- 13) Where the public sector upgrades its assets to support mobile networks, how can industry adoption of these assets be secured?
- 14) Are there specific locations in North and Mid Wales where a greater availability of suitable public sector assets could improve your network (e.g. capacity and coverage)
- 15) How significant do you consider small cells to be in enhancing mobile network coverage and capacity over the next 6 years in comparison to macro cells? Additionally, do you consider small cells to have a future role for your network in rural areas?

## Investment in private network assets

- 16) How can public capital investment support network operators in addressing both network capacity challenges and rural coverage challenges?
- 17) Would your company prefer to secure contracts for all areas detailed on the map (Annex B), or would you prefer potential 'lots'? If 'lots,' please describe your preferred approach to defining them.
- 18) Please reference any current or previous publicly funded schemes or projects which you consider to be examples of effective intervention to improve 4G or 5G network coverage or performance
- 19) Please describe the current and future role of Open RAN in your network within North and Mid Wales (Annex B).



## Annex D – Location Data for Proposed Areas of Interest

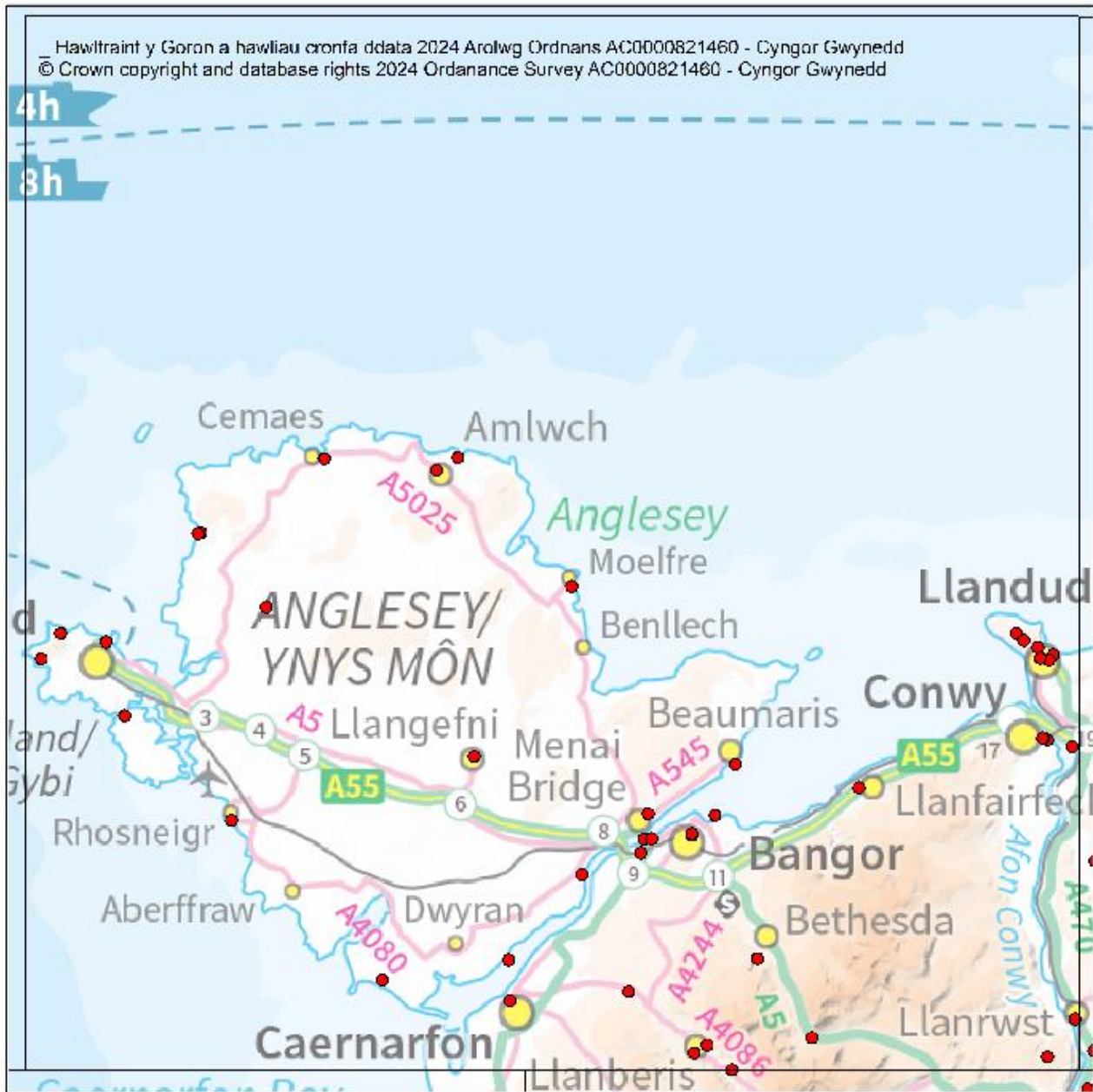
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<b>GCC1009</b>	277809.2	382755.7	<b>GCC2006</b>	293791.1	377462.3
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<b>GCC1021</b>	254510	363171.5	<b>GCC2018</b>	318285.9	378793.8
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# Annex E - Proposed Areas of Interest:

## Area 1

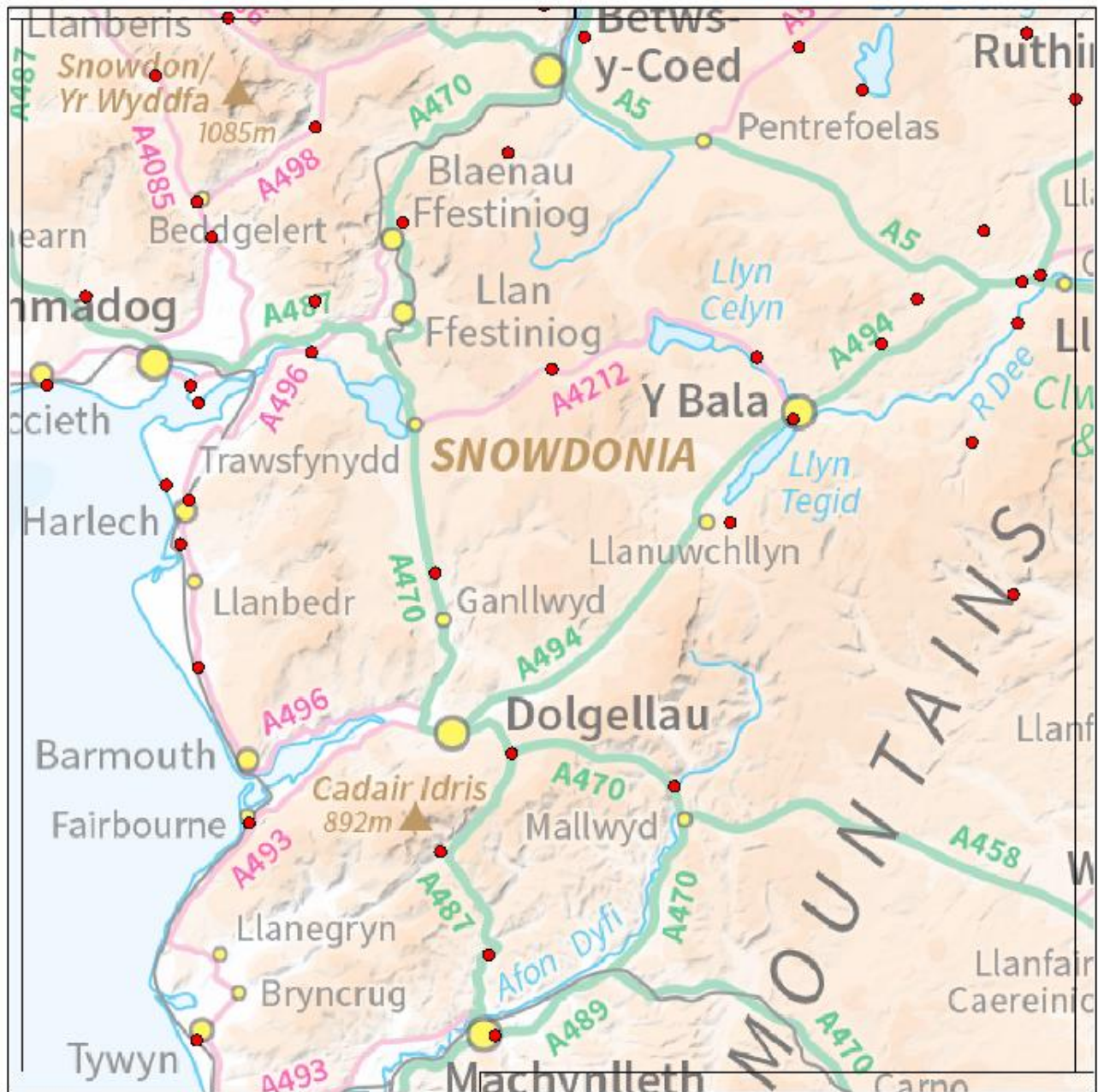




Area 3

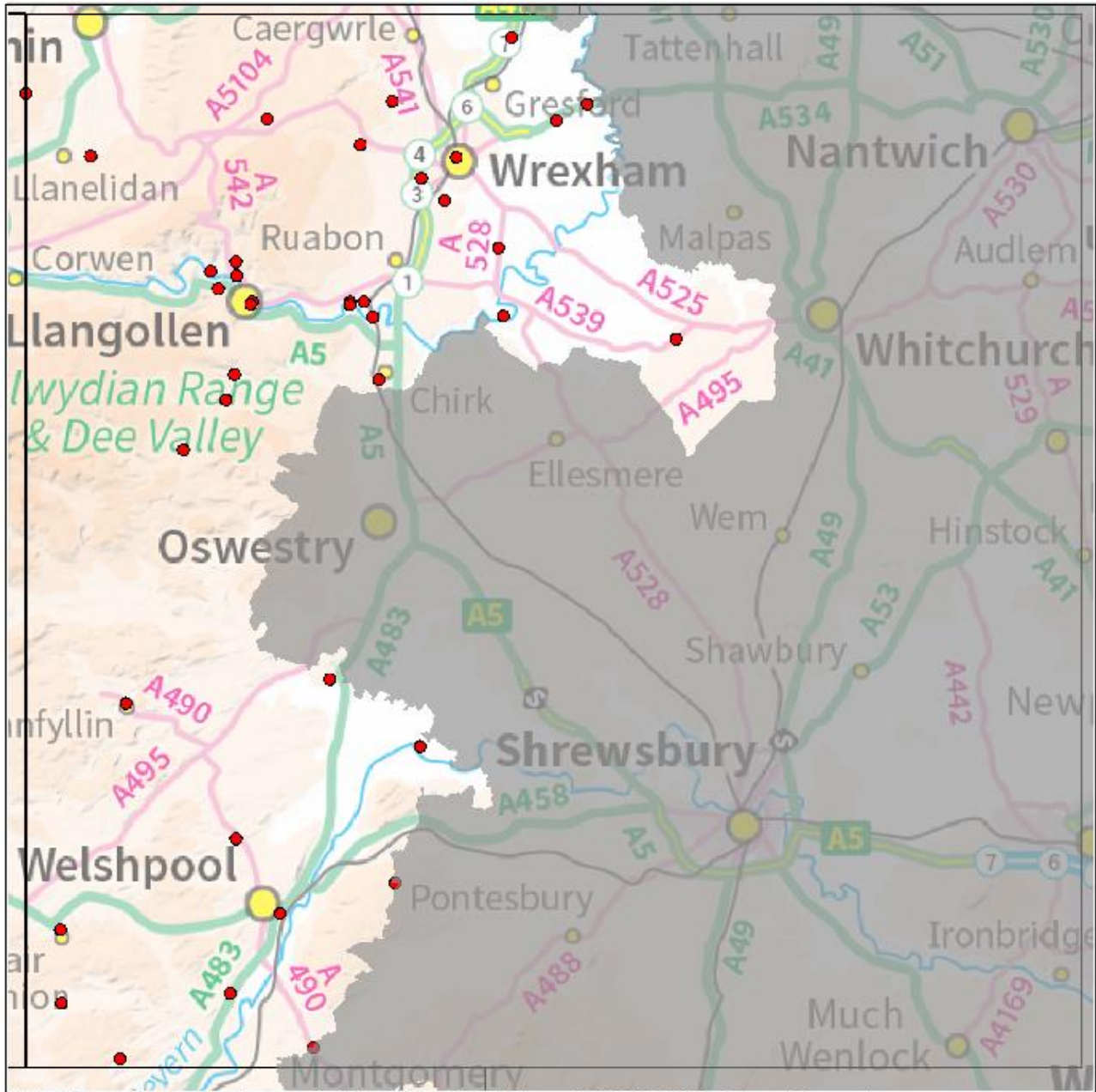


Area 4



Hawlfraint y Goron a hawliau cronfa ddata 2024 Arolwg Ordnans AC0000821460 - Cyngor Gwynedd  
© Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey AC0000821460 - Cyngor Gwynedd

Area 5



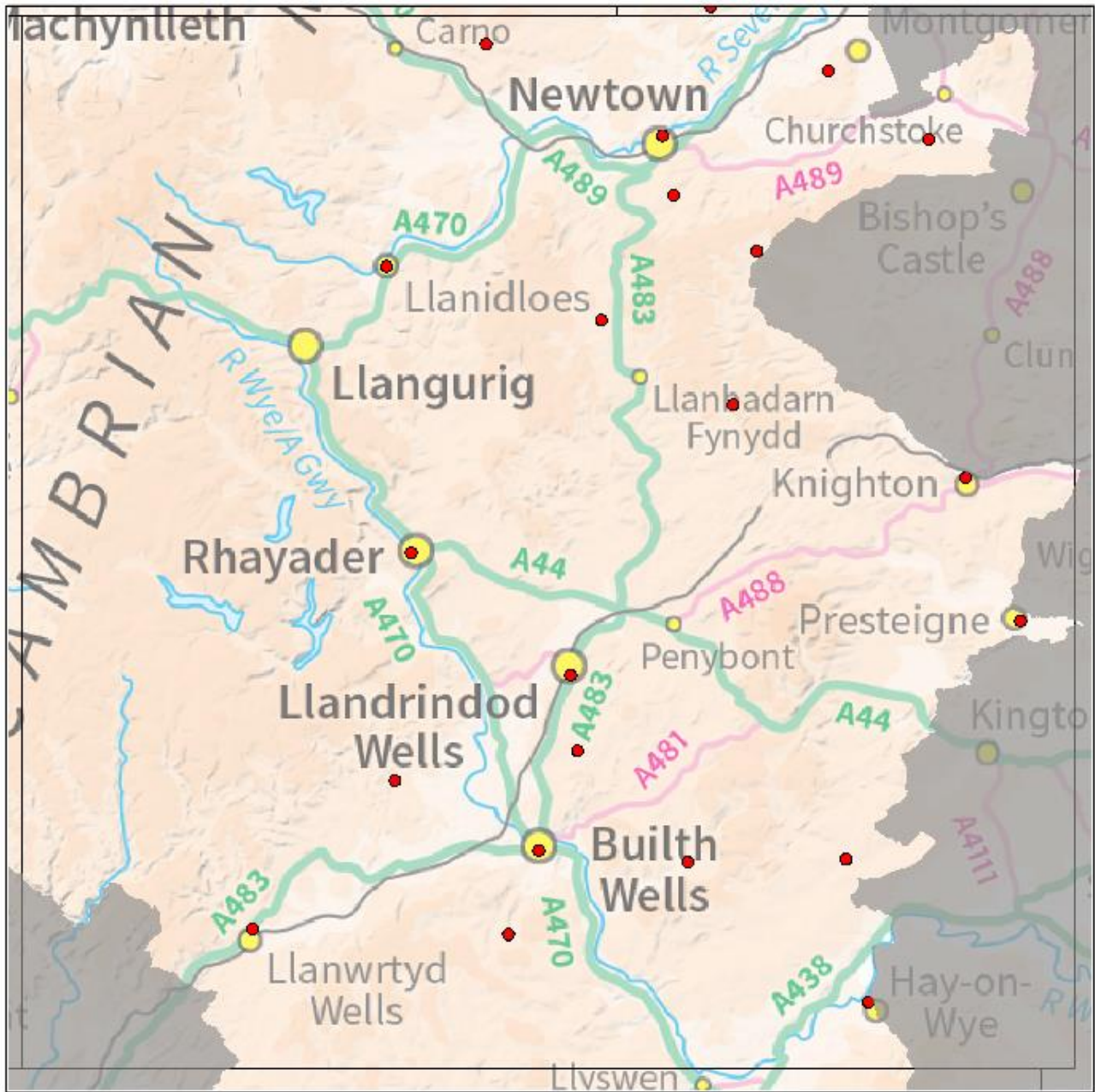
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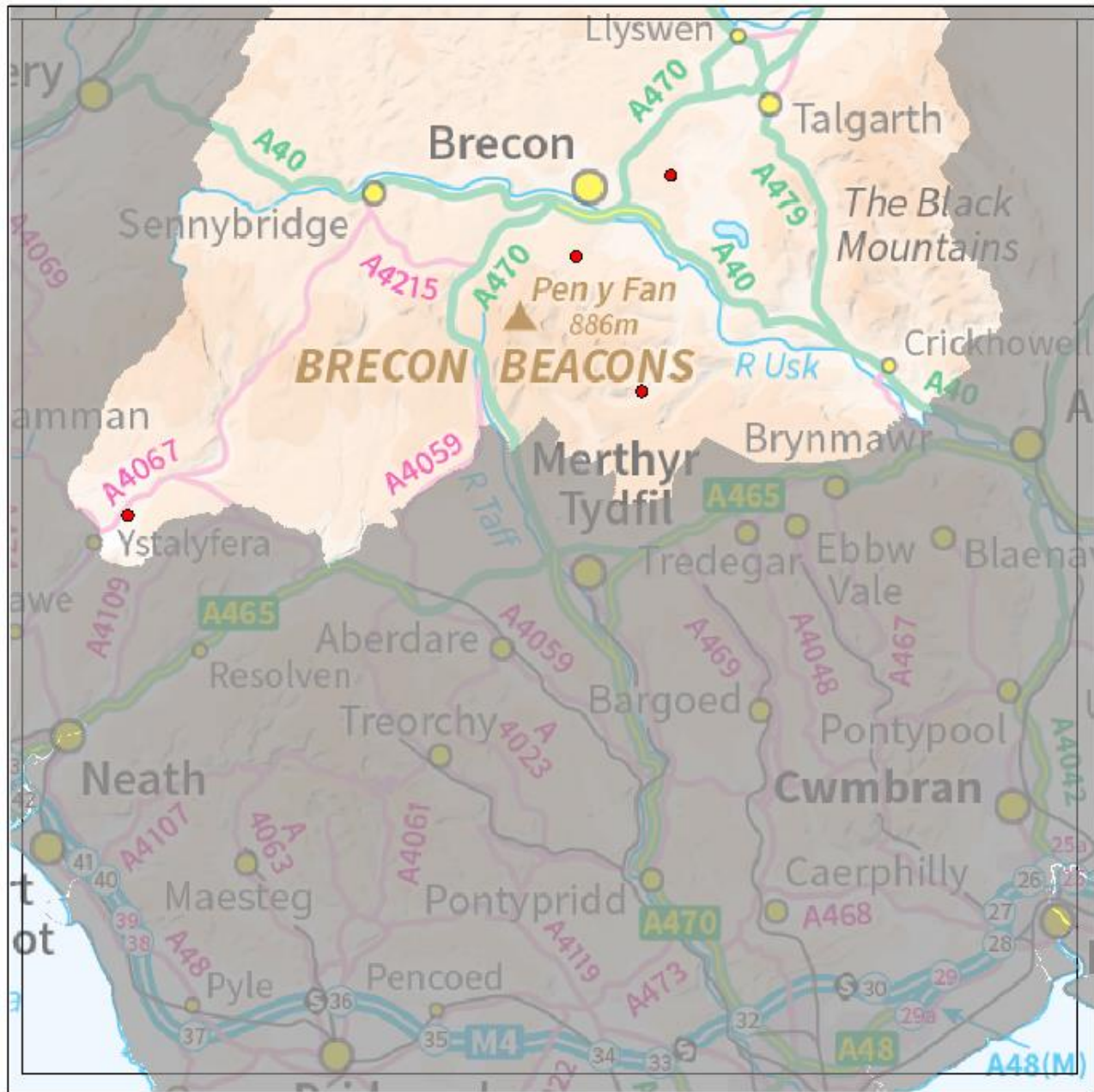
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Area 8



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