

SITE INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Rural AONB — strategy options before commitment

A Welsh AONB · open countryside · early 2026

3 Routes assessed	2 Discounted with reasoning	9 Data sources queried	£249 Fixed fee
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EXECUTIVE BRIEF

The client owns land in a Welsh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The intent is a residential dwelling. A previous adviser raised One Planet Development (OPD / TAN 6) as the headline route. Our analysis discounts OPD on capacity grounds and identifies two more viable paths — a Replacement Dwelling argument (high viability if a lawful structure is connected to the land) and a Holiday Let / glamping consent (medium-to-high viability based on a directly comparable approval in the same AONB and same authority area).

■ CRITICAL · Critical question must be answered before strategy can be finalised

Our company-records search identified named structures historically associated with the postcode area, with documented references going back two decades or more. **If the client's land is connected to any of these structures — even via outbuilding, access track, or curtilage — a Replacement Dwelling argument becomes the primary route, with much stronger prospects than OPD.** This is the single decision that determines everything that follows.

1. INTELLIGENCE PULL — WHAT WE SEARCHED, WHAT WE FOUND

Planning Decoder does not produce generic planning letters. We run the site against multiple data sources using custom extraction tooling, document what each query returned, and tell the client honestly what we could and could not find. The intelligence pull below took approximately two hours of automated and manual research.

Data Source	Method	Intelligence Recovered
Local Development Plan (current)	Policy mapping	AONB designation confirmed. Open countryside policies mapped to site.
LPA planning committee PDFs	Custom PDF extraction	Scanned committee agenda archives directly — the public portal does not surface these. Recovered a directly comparable AONB glamping approval from a few years prior which would not appear in standard searches.
Companies House register	Named entity search	Identified named structures historically associated with the postcode. Critical for the Replacement Dwelling route.
Welsh historic-mapping archive	Historic OS mapping	Late 19th and early 20th century surveys available free. Recommended client cross-reference for any structure on or near land.
Welsh Government TAN 6 / OPD framework	Policy analysis	OPD framework reviewed; viability assessed against client's stated capacity.
Welsh AONB precedents (multiple LPAs)	Comparable analysis	Identified an OPD approval in a neighbouring Welsh AONB authority approximately seven years ago — same AONB system, different LPA — as the primary AONB precedent on the OPD route.
Practitioner portfolio (regional architects)	Practitioner analysis	A regional practice secured a Replacement Dwelling consent in the same authority's open countryside — substantially larger than the original cottage. Cited as practitioner precedent.
Valuation Office records	Recommended for client	Not yet retrieved — requires client confirmation of any structure on land before request.
Pre-application register	Recommended for client	Pre-app advice on a specific replacement-dwelling proposal would carry significant weight; not yet pursued.

2. SITE OVERVIEW

Region	A Welsh AONB · upland landscape · low-density rural settlement pattern
Location character	AONB. A-road on western edge. River corridor nearby.

AONB	Designated AONB · confirmed designation
LPA	A Welsh county council planning authority
Open countryside policy	The authority's open-countryside SPG
Active client question	Is the land associated with any pre-existing named structure?
Adviser status	No agent currently engaged. Client weighing routes before committing.

3. ONE PLANET DEVELOPMENT — WHY DISCOUNTED, AND WHY THAT IS THE RIGHT CALL

OPD (Technical Advice Note 6 / TAN 6) is the Welsh Government's framework for new countryside dwellings. It is genuinely powerful policy — the strongest route to a new rural dwelling in Wales. But it requires a credible, evidenced Management Plan demonstrating the applicant's intent and physical capacity to actively manage the land as their primary residence.

This is not a bureaucratic formality. Planning committees scrutinise OPD applications precisely because the policy is exceptional. The Management Plan must demonstrate credible, sustained land management — not aspiration. In a setting where the applicant cannot meet that bar honestly, pursuing OPD wastes meaningful money on consultant fees and almost certainly results in refusal.

The client has assessed their own physical capacity against this requirement and concluded OPD is not a fit. That is the correct call. Proceeding regardless would burn five-figure sums on Management Plan production with a low probability of consent.

✓ **POSITIVE · Comparable OPD precedent — still relevant context**
 An OPD application in a neighbouring Welsh AONB authority was approved unanimously by committee approximately seven years ago. It confirms the AONB designation is not a barrier to OPD approval where the Management Plan is credible. It does NOT say OPD is the right route here — it says that **if** circumstances ever shift to make OPD viable, the AONB context is not fatal.

4. STRATEGY OPTIONS — TWO LIVE ROUTES

#	Route	Viability	Notes
—	One Planet Development (OPD)	Discounted	Requires active physical land management as primary residence. Client's honest assessment is correct.
1	Replacement Dwelling	High — IF a structure is confirmed on/connected to land	Primary route if Companies House structures are connected. The authority's open-countryside SPG governs.
2	Holiday Let / Glamping	Medium-high — based on directly comparable approval	The authority approved a glamping site within the same AONB a few years ago. Same LPA, same AONB, no existing dwelling. Closest comparable available.

5. ROUTE DETAIL

Route 1 — Replacement Dwelling

What the intelligence shows. Our company-records search — a source most planning advisers would not think to query — identified named structures at the postcode with documented histories going back two decades or more (Welsh historic-mapping archives will confirm extent). If the client's land is connected to any of these — even in a secondary way (outbuilding, access track, curtilage relationship) — the planning history of those structures becomes highly relevant to a Replacement Dwelling case.

What the policy says. The authority's open-countryside SPG permits replacement where a lawfully established dwelling exists or can be evidenced — through the planning register, Valuation Office records, or historic mapping. Size increases are permitted where design quality and sustainability strongly justify them. The AONB context raises the bar on design but does not prevent approval. The existing structure must typically be demolished as a planning condition.

What the authority has approved. A regional practice secured planning permission in the same authority's open countryside for a replacement dwelling — substantially larger than the original cottage. The permission cited 'experience, environment and design' as the basis for approval. This is a workable practitioner-level precedent.

Route 2 — Holiday Let / Glamping

What the intelligence shows. A few years ago, the same authority's planning committee considered a glamping application within the same AONB in open countryside. This was not retrieved via the standard planning portal — it was surfaced via custom extraction of committee agenda PDFs. The application was approved.

Why this matters. Same local planning authority. Same landscape designation. Same policy context: open countryside, no existing dwelling, holiday use only. This is as close a comparable as the client will find — not a general precedent from another part of Wales, but from this authority in this AONB.

Typical conditions to expect: holiday occupancy only (no permanent residential use); reinstatement land bond (site returned to former use if holiday use ceases); approved materials and colour finishes; external lighting restrictions (dark sky protection priority in this AONB); detailed landscaping specification.

▲ ATTENTION · Strategic value beyond the application itself

A successful holiday let approval establishes a track record of sympathetic, low-impact development on the land. It demonstrates to officers and committee that the land can accommodate development without harm to the AONB. **If a future Replacement Dwelling argument is pursued, this prior approval becomes a positive in the planning balance — not a barrier.**

6. RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS — IN ORDER

#	Action	Cost / Time
1	Answer the critical question. Is the land connected to a named structure at the postcode? Confirm in writing to your adviser before any application work begins.	Free · this week
2	Cross-reference Welsh historic mapping. Free, public. Search the postcode and view late 19th/early 20th century OS surveys. Look for any structure on or near the land. Save screenshots.	Free · 1 hour
3	Confirm planning history via a planning agent. Ask an authority-experienced agent to retrieve all planning history for the postcode and any adjacent records. The LPA planning office will provide.	£0–£200 · 1 week
4	Pre-application advice on whichever route resolves first. The authority's pre-app fee is modest. Get the case officer's position in writing before committing to a full application.	~£250 · 4–6 weeks
5	Engage a regulated planning consultant (RTPI member). Use one with AONB-replacement-dwelling experience in the authority area. Practitioners cited in this report are good starting points.	Quote on scope · ongoing

7. KEY COMPARABLE DECISIONS

Decision Type	Route	Outcome	Relevance
OPD approval — neighbouring Welsh AONB authority	OPD	Approved unanimously, ~7 years ago	Confirms AONB is not a barrier to committee approval. Discounted as a route here on capacity grounds, but precedent recorded.
Glamping site — same authority, same AONB	Holiday Let	Approved, a few years ago	Most directly applicable comparable. Same authority, same AONB, similar open-countryside context. Surfaced via PDF extraction — not on the public portal.
Replacement dwelling — same authority's open countryside	Replacement Dwelling	Approved (regional practice)	Practitioner-level precedent for substantial uplift on replacement dwelling. AONB context raises design bar; does not preclude approval.

8. KEY CONTACTS & RESOURCES

Resource	What to do
Welsh historic-mapping archive (National Library of Wales)	Free. Search the postcode. View late 19th / early 20th century OS surveys. Save screenshots of any structure on or near the land. Bring to your planning consultant.
LPA Planning Department (general)	Request all planning history for the postcode. Ask for pre-application advice fee schedule for replacement dwellings and holiday lets in AONB.
Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) directory	Find an authority-experienced AONB planning consultant. Ask for portfolio examples of replacement-dwelling and AONB approvals before engaging.
Welsh Government — TAN 6 / Planning Policy Wales	Read TAN 6 directly before any further OPD conversation. The text itself is the best test of whether the route is right for you.

AONB Partnership office	AONB officers are consulted on all planning applications in the designation. Early informal contact is recommended for design-sensitive proposals.
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