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Arfordir Môn - disgrifiad cryno

Mae'r ardal yn cynnwys holl lannau môr Ynys Môn, gan gynnwys Ynys Gybi gerllaw. Mae cyfeiriad gogledd-ddwyreiniol i dde-orllewinol ffawtiau daearegol, a'r amryw fathau o greigiau, yn dylanwadu ar lun a ffurf y glannau. Er bod llawer o Fôn yn dir isel, ceir bryniau uwch yn hanner gogleddol y glannau: a'r uchaf yw Mynydd y Twr, sydd â'i lethrau grugog, agored yn disgyn yn syth i'r môr. Mae'r gwynt fynychaf o'r de-orllewin, a glannau'r gongl honno yn llawer mwy agored i'r tywydd, gyda phyllau a thwyni tywod yn ymestyn i mewn i'r tir. Mae llawer o'r hyn fu'n aber Cefni wedi'i adennill o'r môr, ond cynhwysir y tir gwastad, isel hwnnw o fewn yr ardal neilltuol hon.

Er yn dir amaeth, gan fwyaf, mae yn yr ardal weundiroedd glan môr, twyni, a phrysgoed eithin. Gyda dwy blanhigfa goed fwyaf yr ynys, mae'r tiroedd hyn o gymorth i nodweddu hunaniaeth yr ardal, rhagor gweddill yr ynys. Mae'r Lasinwen, culfor llanwol, troellog, yn gwahanu Môn rhag Ynys Gybi. Yn y gogledd, crëwyd tirwedd drawiadol Mynydd Parys pan ganfuwyd mwyn copr o safon isel yn union o dan wyneb y tir yn y 18fed ganrif.

Ar Ynys Gybi ceir tref a phorthladd mwyaf Môn, Caergybi. Dyma gyrchfan teithwyr ffordd a rheilffordd i Ddulyn. Cyrhaeddir Môn o dir mawr Cymru ar draws y ddwy bont drawiadol ym Mhorthaethwy a Llanfair Pwllgwyngyll, sy'n croesi Afon Menai yn ei man culaf.

Y tir hwn, hefyd, yn fras, yw Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol Arfordir Môn, a sawl hyd o Arfordir Treftadaeth. Dynodir yr Ynys yn Barc Daearegol. Mae Castell Biwmares, yn y dwyrain, yn Safle Treftadaeth y Byd, gan ddarparu (ynghyd â phentrefi eraill fel Rhosneigr a Threarddur) canolbwynt a delwedd ar gyfer twristiaeth gyfoes wedi'i seilio ar adloniant glan môr a threftadaeth.

Summary Description

The area encompasses all of the coastal areas of the Isle of Anglesey, including the adjacent Holy Island. The north-east to south-west trending geological faults and varying rock types influence the shape and geometry of the coast. Although much of Anglesey is low lying, the higher hills lie in the northern half of the coastal area, culminating in Holyhead Mountain, whose exposed heathery slopes plunge directly into the sea. The prevailing winds also create a distinctly more exposed south-westerly coast, where well developed dune systems and lagoons run inland. Much of the former estuary of the Afon Cefni has been reclaimed but the resulting coastal levels remain within this character area.

Though mainly farmed, the area contains numerous coastal heaths, dunes, and areas of gorse scrub. Together with the island's two largest woodland plantations, these areas help to distinguish the character from that further inland. A meandering inter-tidal strait separates mainland Anglesey from Holy Island. In the north, the spectacular landscape at Parys Mountain was called into being by the discovery of low-grade copper ore just below the surface of the mountain in the 18th century.

Holy Island includes the largest port and town of Holyhead. The port is the destination for main road and rail travellers heading to Dublin. Arrival on Anglesey from mainland Wales is across either of two spectacular bridges at Menai Bridge, which cross the estuary-like Menai Strait around the narrowest point.

The area coincides with Anglesey Coast AONB, along with a number of stretches of Heritage Coast. The island is designated as a Geopark. Beaumaris Castle in the east is a World Heritage Site, which together with other settlements such as Rhosneigr and Trearddur Bay, provide a focus and image for today's coastal recreation and heritage based tourism.

Key Characteristics

The coastal zone - of by far the largest island in Wales (720 km²), containing the largest outcrop of Precambrian rocks in southern Britain, but with areas of other rock types too.

Much of the highest land - on the island falls within the coastal area, including Parys Mountain (147m) and Holyhead Mountain (220m).

Strong geological orientation - There is a south west to north east geological

orientation, resulting in corrugated topography, which is manifest along the coastline in places as rocky headlands and sandy bays. Igneous rock intrusions and outcrops of quartzite have created the dramatic landforms and skyline of Holyhead Mountain and South Stack, at Holy Island.
Great variety of coastal types - The coastline has great variety, from sheer coastal cliffs and dramatic rocky headlands, to small sandy coves and extensive low lying dunes and sandy estuaries. A legacy of coastal quarrying that has long since ceased, remains apparent in places, for example at Penmon.
Wind exposure but some shelter - The striking and windswept heathland landscapes of the wild coastline at Holyhead Mountain and North and South Stack, together with the barren, mined landscape of Parys Mountain, contrast markedly with the gentler, green, pastoral landscapes inland, away from the immediate coastal edge.
Pasture - Soils include deep loams supporting predominantly pastoral land cover with occasional hay meadows, away from the coastline.
Heather and heath - a feature of the thin soils in the more elevated areas such as Holyhead Mountain, Mynydd Bodafon and the coastline near Amlwch.
Cloddau – or earth bank field boundaries feature in the north and west with occasional stone walls, whereas hedges are more common in the south and east.
Reclaimed marsh - The large sandy Malltraeth estuary includes significant reclaimed areas and the straightened tidal river channel of the Afon Cefni, with wetland elements including rush pasture and marsh.
Lagoons - There are a series of distinctive freshwater lagoons on the coast facing Caernarfon Bay, sandwiched between rising inland landscapes and the very well developed coastal dune systems.
Prehistoric and funerary sites – including standing stones, chambered tombs, barrows and cairns, distinctive Iron Age hill and promontory forts, the largest and most prominent being Bwrdd Arthur, on the Penmon peninsula.
Coastal Settlements – often relating to former industry, such as the mining town of Amlwch at the foot of Parys Mountain, or to strategic transport routes, such as Thomas Telford's A5 and the port town of Holyhead (the only large settlement in the area) on Holy Island. Much C20th coastal development relates to tourism and retirement property.
A number of prominent man-made landmarks – including Beaumaris Castle (World heritage Site), the two bridges that cross the Menai Strait and connect with the mainland, Parys Mountain (distinctive industrial quarry landscape), Wylfa Nuclear Power Station, and the Aluminium works on Holy Island, with it's tall, widely visible chimney.

Visual and Sensory profile

The area's strongest identity comes from the varying expression of the relationship of the sea to the land, through cliffs, beaches, estuaries and coastal levels and dunes, lagoons and ports. Much of the area away from the sheltered Menai Strait is subject to strong wind exposure. The prevailing winds batter a largely treeless south westerly facing coast, giving it a remoter, elemental quality, where any settlement and woodland has to work against this adversity. Yet Anglesey only reveals its island disposition in a few places where the sea is visible in more than one direction, such as at Penmon, Carmel Head or Holy Island. Inland, the flatter and undulating topography of the interior appears to stretch away for a great distance, backed in places by low hills near the north east, north west and western coastlines. At close quarters, some of these hills have distinctly mountain-like qualities, with rocky, sharp profiles, thin soils and heath land cover. On Mynydd Parys, the long abandoned copper mine workings have created a highly distinctive, enclosed, orange-purple, lunar-like landscape, which is in striking contrast to its surroundings.

Views to the distant mountains of Eryri create a dramatic south eastern backdrop to much of Anglesey. Closer to, these mountains become more impressive and engaging, and

when viewed across a foreground setting of the Menai Strait around Beaumaris, they engender a sense of scale and drama more commonly associated with the sea lochs of the west of Scotland. At the other end of the Strait, the extent of the dunes, beaches and Caernarfon Bay provide a spectacular setting for views of the Llŷn peninsula, which from Ynys Llanddwyn, offer one of the most enduring and distinctive broad-scale vistas in Wales.

More generally, the landscape is gentle, farmed and fairly tranquil, but with a number of contrasting large-scale developments, most notably the Wylfa Nuclear Power Station, the RAF Valley air base and the Anglesey Aluminium smelting works and chimney, the radio transmission masts at Llanddona, and historically the Mynydd Parys copper mines and Amlwch. The settlements of Benllech, Rhosneigr and Trearddur Bay and their associated holiday developments, the busy town and port of Holyhead, and the commuter settlements of Llanfairpwll, Menai Bridge and Llandegfan that overlook the Menai Strait, are centres of activity in this otherwise peaceful and in parts, remote landscape, the best features of which can be enjoyed in abundance along the Anglesey Coast Path.



From one of the many coastal heather heaths, looking to Holyhead Mountain. © John Briggs



Porth Padrig, on the north coast. (Wylfa Power Station seen in the distance). © John Briggs



The Caernarfon Bay coast, headlands, settlement and mix of heath and fields, seen from Holyhead Mountain. © John Briggs



The sylvan, settled landscape by the Menai Strait, and Telford's Bridge. © John Briggs



The Malltraeth Estuary and Newborough Forest backed by the mountains of Llŷn. © John Briggs



From the rocky hills near Porth Wen (Llanbadrig) looking to Mynydd y Garn and the distant Holyhead Mountain. The village in the middle distance is Cemaes. © John Briggs



The interior of Mynydd Parys, a strange ex-industrial landscape of exposed brightly coloured rock, tips and ponds. © John Briggs

Geological Landscape influences

At 720 km² in area, Anglesey is Wales's largest island and its coastal geology can not be considered in isolation from that of the interior. It's rich geological coastal heritage now forms a Geopark, much of which is characterised by rocky cliffs, reflecting the erosion resistant bedrock geology. The island has the largest outcrop of Precambrian rocks in southern Britain, but also has areas of Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian, Devonian and Carboniferous rocks. Though generally low-lying and undulating, the 'corrugated' topography follows the general north east to south west 'grain' imposed by major faults and variations in rock types. This is reflected in alignments of rivers and, not least, the Menai Strait. On the south west coast, the main valleys form shallow estuaries or marsh in places, with extensive sand dunes, some backed with lagoons. The main hills on the island are to the north east and north west on Holy Island. Although modest in height, many hills have distinctive, rocky landforms and thin soils, including Holyhead Mountain (220m), Parys Mountain (147m) and Mynydd Bodafon (168m).

Parys Mountain is the only area of Silurian rock found on Anglesey. Though relatively small, it has been of great importance for copper exploitation, leaving a landscape of pits, waste tips and settling ponds. Carboniferous Limestone, forming coastal cliffs around Penmon and Benllech, was exploited for building stone, leaving a legacy of disused coastal quarries.

Large areas are covered with boulder clay and the sands and gravels deposited by melt-water streams from the wasting ice sheet of the last glaciation. In the northern part of Anglesey, dozens of drumlins (ice-moulded landforms) give rise to a distinctive 'basket of eggs' topography. The characteristic ridge and basin topography has also been responsible for the formation of number of lakes and peat-filled hollows.

Landscape Habitats influences

Led by its geology, topography, and coastal context, the area forms an ecologically rich and varied series of habitats. The sheer coastal cliffs and dramatic rocky headlands along the northern coast and Holy Island Coast SSSI are notable for sea-bird colonies. They contrast with the low-lying dunes along the west coast at areas such as at Rhosneigr, Tywyn Aberffraw SSSI and Newborough Warren, a NNR supporting many rare and protected species. To the north west of Newborough Warren is Newborough Forest, the largest wooded area on Anglesey, formed by a coniferous plantation overlying the dune system.

Adjacent to Newborough Forest are expanses of coastal sand with Traeth Abermenai to the south and Malltraeth Sands to the north. The associated saltmarsh in the Cefni estuary extends inland to form Malltraeth Marshes along the flood-plain of the Cefni. Part of the Marshes also forms an RSPB reserve. The 'Inland Sea' that divides Holy Island from Central Anglesey, Beddmanarch Bay and Cwmyran Bay SSSI forms an extensive area of intertidal habitat of particular value for wading birds. The Menai Strait (SAC) forms a distinctive habitat, with its fast tidal currents running through the narrow channel (especially the Swellies SSSI) and extensive intertidal areas at each end, notably at Newborough Warren (SSSI, SAC, NNR).

A short distance inland from the coast around much of Anglesey are areas of less agriculturally improved land with coastal grassland and coastal heath habitats of particular note, together with areas of scrub. The thin soils on Holy Island support the largest and most ecologically valuable examples of these habitats. Penmon Point and Red Wharf Bay are notable for more calcareous habitat because of the underlying Carboniferous Limestone. Other notable ecological areas further inland are the coastal lagoons surrounding RAF Valley (Valley Lakes SSSI), and Parys Mountain (a cluster of SSSI sites), which has many unusual species owing to the metal rich substrate from the mines.

Historic Landscape influences

Parts of the Anglesey coastal area were settled in the Mesolithic period; radio-carbon dating has confirmed that a hunters' camp was established on what later became a coastal headland at Trwyn Du near Aberffraw, around 7000 BC, at a time when the climate was much warmer and sea-levels lower. These early settlers could take advantage of woodland environments and the chance to hunt game in the marshes. Some four thousand years later, the first Neolithic farming communities disposed of their dead in great communal burial chambers, of which the most famous is Barclodiad y Gawres at Llanfaelog, on the form of a 'passage grave' similar to the great tombs of the Boyne Valley in Ireland.

Other coastal locations also bear witness to the closeness of Anglesey to Ireland in later periods, such as Llangwyfan church, built on an island reached by a narrow causeway, which may have been dedicated to St Kevin of Glendalough in Co. Wicklow. Tywyn y Capel is dedicated to St Brigid of Kildare – in Welsh, San Ffraid. Holyhead evolved from a Roman naval base which guarded the area from raiders in the Irish Sea, and evolved in modern times into the principal British port for Dublin. A Viking presence has been

identified at several locations in the Red Wharf Bay area. Irish, Viking and Northern English influences are evident in the carving of the high crosses from the coastal monastery at Penmon.

This area of Anglesey differs little from the interior in terms of settlement type or vernacular character. There are some Medieval settlements on or near the coast - notably Beaumaris, Aberffraw, Llanfaes and Newborough and some of the smaller villages probably have early origins, such as Llanfaethlu and Llanfechell. The Anglo-Norman borough of Beaumaris preserves some fine Medieval and later buildings, most notably the castle (a World Heritage Site), but overall settlement character everywhere is 19th century and later. New settlements of the later periods are roadside villages (Penysarn, Llanfachraeth, Brynsiencyn), encroachment settlements (Porth Swtan, Pengorffwysfa), and from the beginning of the 20th century, resorts such as Benllech and Trearddur Bay. As well as these nucleated settlements around the coast, there is also a mesh of much smaller hamlets, scattered cottages and small farms. Traditional building styles are dominated by stone, mostly whitewashed or rendered, and a few thatched cottages survive.

The houses and parks of Anglesey's once-powerful landowners are mostly located in this coastal area – Carreglwyd, Bodorgan, Plas Newydd, Plas Coch, Baron Hill and Plas Llandegfan. The strip from Menai Bridge to Beaumaris is dominated by large 19th century houses built to exploit the view across the Menai Strait towards Arfon and Eryri beyond.

The spectacular growth of the Parys copper mines from the late 18th century brought about the development of the port and town of Amlwch. Holyhead developed as a major port as a consequence of growing economic and political union with Ireland, and the need to improve harbour facilities and overland transport such as Thomas Telford's post road (A5) and later, Robert Stephenson's Chester to Holyhead railway.

Cultural Landscape influences

The coastal strip of Anglesey and the adjoining Holy Island – the sea coast of Wales' largest island, is known in Welsh as Môn and in English as Anglesey, from the Norse Onguls-ey, the island of the Norseman Ongul, a name which reflects its position on the ancient sea-routes of northern Europe. The area has traditionally looked to the sea and guarded the approach to what was once the world's busiest port, at Liverpool.

At Holyhead, a coastal station was established by the Romans, which later became the site of a church. The town which eventually grew up around it became more important as it displaced Chester as the main port link to Ireland. Holyhead is one of the great 'gateway' ports not only of Wales but of Britain – it was the first sight of the country that was to be their new home for thousands of Irish people in the years of famine and emigration. Access to the sea continues to influence today's cultural character, with a focus on tourism and recreation.

The coastal settlement of Aberffraw evolved from a Roman fortlet into a royal site, associated perhaps with the royal church at Llangadwaladr, where Cadfan, famed as the most renowned king of Gwynedd, is reputedly buried. As the site of one of the princes' principal llysoedd, Aberffraw was hailed as one of the three tribal thrones of the Island of Britain in the Trioedd Ynys Prydein. It was the seat of Anarawd ap Rhodri Fawr; in the 12th century, the princes of Gwynedd began to use the title 'Prince of Aberffraw' to emphasise their connection to Rhodri.

The excavated llys complex at Newborough nearby, adjacent to the planted Edwardian borough, also articulates the loss of Gwynedd's independence and its incorporation into

the Anglo-Norman state. By the same token, the planted castle and town of Beaumaris demonstrate the resources that Edward I was prepared to lavish on his newly-conquered territory.

In the north, the spectacular landscape at Parys Mountain was called into being by the discovery of low-grade copper ore just below the surface of the mountain in the 18th century. The industrial communities of Amlwch and Porth Amlwch attracted miners from Cornwall, Derbyshire and elsewhere to work in the smelters by the harbour or in the mines on Parys Mountain. The 'sublime' aspect of the mines attracted travellers and landscape painters. Though copper-production largely ceased in the mid-19th century, Porth Amlwch remained a centre of wooden sailing shipping construction into the 20th century. For mariners sailing in and out of Liverpool, Point Lynas was a well-known landmark for years, and many ship-paintings show it in the background.

Cemaes, Benllech and Red Wharf Bay were developed for tourism from the late 19th century, and many of the coastal settlements have become the homes of retirees from England. These resorts together with Trearddur Bay and Rhosneigr in the west, sustain a vibrant tourist economy and the island's image as a popular tourist destination, related to coastal recreation, for which it is most widely known today.



The general spread of Holyhead town and port, seen from Holyhead Mountain. © John Briggs



'The Inland Sea': a Strait that separates Holy Island from the rest of Anglesey. © John Briggs.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 1: HOLYHEAD MOUNTAIN





Gogarth Bay, Holyhead Mountain



Abraham's Bosom and South Stack

Description

Holyhead Mountain forms the highest point on Anglesey, rising up to 220 metres AOD. It has a distinctive rounded profile which reflects the underlying geology of metamorphic Cambrian age rocks and includes the well known South and North Stacks on its rocky northern coastline. The resultant landscape is one of open rocky moorland with immense natural history and historic/cultural interest. It includes Holyhead Mountain Conservation Area and the Breakwater Country Park, the site of a disused quarry, and the settlement pattern reflects this quarrying past. An isolated, wild non tame landscape with distinctive land use and fine views. Its historic and cultural values are also important. There is evidence of settlement from prehistoric times, through to the wider encroachment of common land and quarrying. Culturally it forms an iconic feature, especially to the many immigrants from Ireland, where it was the first sight of the UK. The importance of the LCA is reflected by the range of statutory designations – SSSI, SAC, SPA, SAM, RIGS that are found. Cross reference to Regional Seascape Unit 8.

Key Issues

Habitat & Geological Management

There are a number of important habitats and geological features in this area, including upland, moorland, rock outcrops and distinctive features. Any development or management proposals should ensure that:-

- Direct and consequential impacts, especially on habitat areas addressed.
- Consider the potential for habitat development or enhancement.
- Protection of geological features, many of national /international value.
- Have regard to the AONB Management Plan.

Historic Landscapes

The area contains relicts of quarrying both in the form of disused quarries, but also a distinctive settlement pattern. Particular consideration should be given for any proposals to develop or extend the Breakwater County Park respect these qualities. An important consideration will be the impact of increased visitor numbers, both to the County Park and also the RSPB facility at South Stack. Consideration should also be given to the Holyhead Mountain Conservation Area SPG.

LANDMAP Aspect Area Matrix – LCA1 Holyhead Mountain												
Aspect Area	UID	Area Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Overall Evaluation
Geological Landscapes	YNSMNGLO81	Cors	L	L	L	L						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO78	Holyhead Mountain	H	H	M	H						High
	YNSMNGLO79	Tyddyn	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO80	South Stack	H	M	M	M						High
	YNSMNGLO92	South Stack – Holyhead Coast	O	O	O	O						Outstanding
Landscape Habitats	YNSMNLH035	Farmland NW of Holyhead	L	L	M	U	L	U	L	L		Low
	YNSMNLH047	Farmland SW of Holyhead	L	L	M	U	L	U	L	M		Low
	YNSMNLH054	Holyhead Mountain heath	H	H	L	U	H	H	O	O		Outstanding
	YNSMNLH117	Cors Tre Wilmot	H	H	L	U	H	L	H	M		Moderate
	YNSMNLH126	Holy Island – Clifed Coast	O	O	L	U	U	H	O	O		Outstanding
Visual & Sensory	YNSMNVS001	Holyhead Mountain	O	H	O	O						Outstanding
	YNSMNVS007	Holy Island	H	M	H	M						High
	YNSMNVS054	Holy Island Coast	H	H	H	M						High
	YNSMNVS055	South Stack/North Stack	U	O	H	O						Outstanding
Historic Landscapes	YNSMNHL030	Holyhead	O	O	M	H						Outstanding
	YNSMNHL031	Holy Island/South Stack	O	O	H	O	M					Outstanding
Cultural Landscapes	YNSMNCL001		U	O	O	H	O	H	H	H	M	Outstanding
	YNSMNCL002	Holyhead Mountain	O	O	O	U	O	H	L	H	L	Outstanding
	YNSMNCL003	Breakwater & Country Park	M	O	O	H	H	H	U	M	M	Outstanding
	YNSMNCL019	Northern Coast	H	H	H	U	H	H	H	M	M	Outstanding

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 2: HOLY ISLAND



Description

The LCA forms the majority of Holy Island and contains the main settlement of the island, Holyhead. It is a physically distinct unit separated from the main island but linked by a causeway (Stanley Embankment) and the Four Mile Bridge. It falls into two distinctive sub units, separated by the development corridor of Holyhead-Trearddur along the B4545 road. To the north of this, the landscape is relatively low lying but due to the underlying geology has a number of craggy outcrops. The area has small fields typically with stone boundaries and gorse hedges. The fir trees that grow here exhibit a windblown form. To the south of the road, again there are rough, craggy areas. However around Rhoscolyn is an area of more undulating terrain, where glacial clay cover is more widespread, with discrete rocky outcrops and areas of coastal and estuarine alluvium. At Penrhos is the former estate of the Stanley family which is now managed as a Country Park.

There are a number of important habitats - dry heaths, coastal and intertidal - often within a larger matrix of improved grassland. However many of these 'islands' of habitat value are designated as SSSIs. Holyhead and Trearddur form the main settlement axis. Holyhead, centred on a Roman town, has become a major port with associated industries. In more recent years the arrival of the A55 has increased this. Part of the town is designated as a Conservation Area. Trearddur is a good example of the influence that tourism can bring to an area to affect its character. The hotels, second homes, camping and caravan sites together with the golf course all contribute to this. Notwithstanding this, the LCA represents a landscape character that is quite distinctive – rural, wild, exposed, coastal – with the main detractor being aircraft noise from the adjacent RAF Valley airfield. Cross reference to Seascapes Regional Units 8, 9 and 10.

Key Issues

Settlement Edge

Development around the settlement edges should:-

- Be of a form that reflects the character and qualities of each settlement.
- Be considered in terms of cumulative landscape impacts rather than just the site itself.
- Use landform and vegetation patterns to assist in mitigation of any impacts.
- Do not impose standard solutions, utilise inherent local characteristics.
- Have regard to Holyhead Central Conservation Area and Holyhead Beach Conservation Area SPGs.

Coastal Landscapes

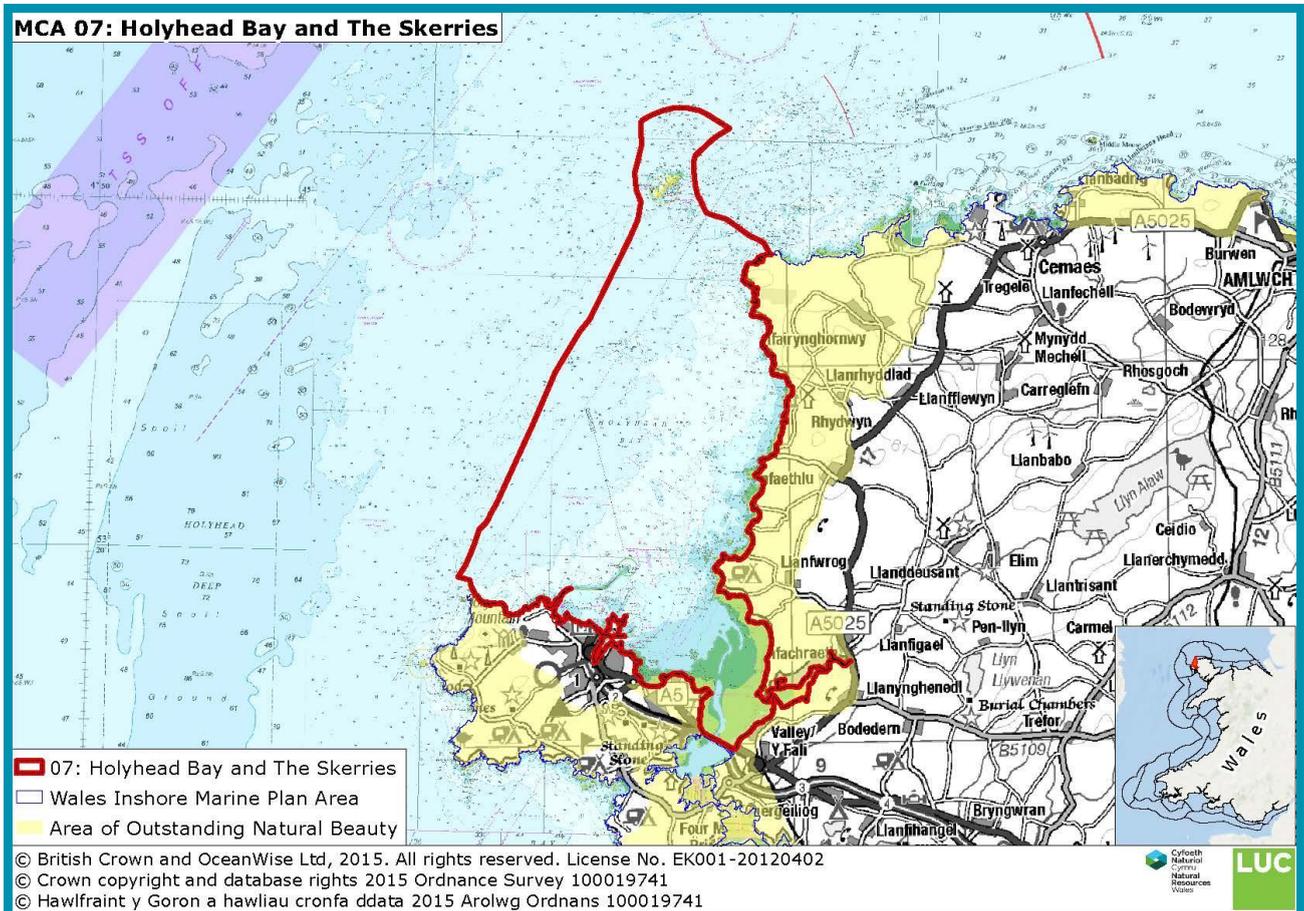
Given the pressure for recreational and tourism developments should take into account:-

- Direct or indirect impact upon coastal landscapes.
- Visual impact on people's perception of the coast, its character and qualities.
- Have regard to the AONB Management Plan.

Habitat Management

Many of the important habitats within the area are protected by statutory designations which provide significant controls in terms of development. Given that, it is important to ensure that opportunities are taken to enhance the wider habitat range in considering development or management schemes.

Landmap Aspect Area Matrix - LCA 2 Holy Island												
Aspect Area	UID	AreaName	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Overall Evaluation
Geological Landscapes	YNSMNGLO66	Tywyn Trwan Common	L	L	L	L						Low
	YNSMNGLO88	Roscolyn	M	L	M	L						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO84	Trearddur (Bay)	L	L	L	L						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO85	Trearddur (S)	H	M	M	M						High
	YNSMNGLO86	Cae'r Sais	O	H	O	H						Outstanding
	YNSMNGLO87	Gwynfryn	L	L	L	L						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO90	Four Mile Bridge	M	L	L	L						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO91	Trearddur coast	O	H	H	H						Outstanding
	YNSMNGLO99	Rhoscolyn coast	O	O	O	O						Outstanding
	YNSMNGLO81	Cors	L	L	L	L						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO77	Holyhead	L	L	L	L						Low
	YNSMNGLO78	Holyhead Mountain	H	H	M	H						High
	YNSMNGLO79	Tyddyn	M	M	M	M						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO80	South Stack	H	M	M	M						High
	YNSMNGLO82	Ty-mawr	L	L	L	L						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO83	Trearddur (N)	M	L	M	M						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO89	Penrhos	L	L	L	L						Moderate
	YNSMNGLO92	South Stack-Holyhead coast	O	O	O	O						Outstanding
YNSMNGLO93	Penrhos coast	H	M	H	H						High	
Landscape Habitats	YNSMNLH002	Tre Wilmot	H	H	L	U	H	H	O	H		Outstanding
	YNSMNLH003	Heath S. of Penrhosfelw	H	H	L	U	H	H	O	O		Outstanding
	YNSMNLH017	Coastal Heath S. of Penrhosfelw	O	H	L	U	H	H	O	H		Outstanding
	YNSMNLH023	Rhostir Ty'n Mynydd	M	M	U	U	M	L	M	M		Moderate
	YNSMNLH024	RAF Valley Airfields	H	H	M	U	U	H	H	M		Moderate
	YNSMNLH035	Farmland N.W. of Holyhead	L	L	M	U	L	U	L	L		Low
	YNSMNLH047	Farmland S.W. of Holyhead	L	L	M	U	L	U	L	M		Low
	YNSMNLH054	Holyhead Mountain heath	H	H	L	U	H	H	O	O		Outstanding
	YNSMNLH062	W. of Holyhead	U	U	M	U	U	M	M	M		Moderate
	YNSMNLH063	Inland Sea	H	O	L	U	H	M	H	H		High
	YNSMNLH082	Holyhead Golfcourse	L	M	M	U	U	L	M	M		Moderate
	YNSMNLH102	Holyhead Breakwater and adjacent land	M	M	M	U	M	M	M	L		Moderate
	YNSMNLH105	Farmland - Trearddur to Holyhead	L	L	M	U	L	U	L	L		Low
	YNSMNLH114	Coast - Porth Corgwl to Cymaran Bay	O	H	L	U	M	H	O	H		Outstanding
	YNSMNLH117	Cors Tre Wilmot	H	H	L	U	H	L	H	M		Moderate
	YNSMNLH122	Holyhead	L	L	M	U	U	L	L	L		Low
	YNSMNLH123	Trearddur	L	L	M	U	U	L	L	M		Low
	YNSMNLH124	Farmland S. of Holyhead	M	H	M	U	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	YNSMNLH125	Beddmanarch Bay	H	H	L	U	H	M	H	H		High
	YNSMNLH126	Holy Island - Cliffed Coast	O	O	L	U	U	H	O	O		Outstanding
	YNSMNLH132	Rhoscolyn Area	M	M	M	U	M	M	M	M		Moderate
	YNSMNLH143	Coedydd Ysad Bodior	U	M	U	U	M	M	M	L		Moderate
	YNSMNV001	Holyhead Mountain	O	H	O	O						Outstanding
YNSMNV007	Holy Island	H	M	H	M						High	
YNSMNV030	Holy Island straits	H	H	H	O						High	
YNSMNV032	Penrhos Beach	H	M	H	M						High	
YNSMNV054	Holy Island coast	H	H	H	M						High	
YNSMNV058	Holyhead	M	L	H	M						Moderate	
YNSMNV064	Trearddur	L	L	H	M						Moderate	
YNSMNV083	Holyhead Harbour	M	M	H	O						High	
YNSMNV084	Aluminium Works	L	L	H	H						Low	
YNSMNV085	Penrhos Coastal Park	M	M	M	M						Moderate	
YNSMNV091	A55 corridor	L	L	M	L						Low	
Historic Landscapes	YNSMNLH026	RAF Valley	H	H	H	O	O					Outstanding
	YNSMNLH027	Rhoscolyn	H	H	H	H	M					High
	YNSMNLH028	Trearddur Bay area	H	H	M	M	M					High
	YNSMNLH029	Penrhos	L	M	L	M	M					Moderate
	YNSMNLH030	Holyhead	O	O	M	O	H					Outstanding
	YNSMNLH031	Holy Island/South Stack	O	O	H	O	M					Outstanding
YNSMNLH073	Penrhos Park	M	L	L	M	H					Moderate	
Cultural Landscapes	YNSMNCLO01		U	O	O	H	O	H	H	H	M	Outstanding
	YNSMNCLO02	Holyhead Mountain	O	O	O	U	O	H	L	H	L	Outstanding
	YNSMNCLO03	Breakwater, Breakwater Country Park	M	O	O	H	H	H	U	M	M	Outstanding
	YNSMNCLO04	Holyhead harbour	H	O	O	H	O	O	H	H	U	Outstanding
	YNSMNCLO05	Anglesey Aluminum	H	M	H	H	M	L	H	L	L	Outstanding
	YNSMNCLO06	A5 Road	O	O	O	O	O	O	L	M	M	Outstanding
	YNSMNCLO08	A55 road	H	M	L	L	M	L	L	H	M	High
	YNSMNCLO09	Railway - Chester to Holyhead	H	O	O	O	O	M	H	H	O	Outstanding
	YNSMNCLO11	Rhosneigr	U	M	M	U	H	M	U	M	H	High
	YNSMNCLO19	Northern Coast	H	H	H	U	H	H	H	M	M	Outstanding
	YNSMNCLO31	Sustrans Cycle Route	O	M	H	L	M	L	L	M	O	High
	YNSMNCLO32	Trearddur Bay	H	H	M	U	H	H	M	M	M	High
	YNSMNCLO34	South west coast	U	H	O	U	H	O	U	H	H	Outstanding



Location and boundaries

This Marine Character Area (MCA) covers the coastal and inshore waters of Holyhead Bay in western Anglesey, extending northwards to take in the Skerries and their associated seas and submerged rocks/reefs.

- The extent of Holyhead Bay is consistent with how the area is depicted for navigational purposes (including Imray, 2009).
- MCA boundaries are guided by bathymetry and information marked on the Marine Charts, with outer waters reaching an average maximum depth of 25 metres.
- The boundaries around the Skerries are closely guided by the Marine Charts, ensuring all related features (e.g. Platters Reef, smaller offshore rocks, wrecks and areas of rough sea/high wave climate) are included.
- MCA encompasses the marine components of local Anglesey Seascape Character Areas 10: Carmel Head to Penrhyn, 11: Holyhead and the northern part of 13: Holyhead Mountain.

Key Characteristics

Key Characteristics
This MCA encompasses the large-scale Holyhead Bay , backed by an AONB-designated coastline stretching from Carmel Head in the north to Porth Namarch on Holy Island.
The rocky islets of the Skerries (with associated rough seas) are found to the north of Carmel Head. The Skerries lighthouse is visible over long distances.
Bay fringed to the east by rugged volcanic cliffs punctuating small sandy bays . Shelter is provided to the south by the rising mass of Holyhead Mountain .
The seabed substrate follows the energy gradient, with exposed rock in the north and areas of coarse sediment in the south.
The Skerries designated as SPA, SSSI and Important Bird Area, managed as a reserve by the RSPB. The islets are important for Arctic terns and as a seal haul site .
Nationally important geology exposed in the cliffs – some of the oldest rocks in Wales. Cliffs topped by wind-pruned maritime grasslands and heath, supporting important sea bird colonies (including within the Holy Island Coast SPA and SAC).
Extensive SSSI covering intertidal areas , including the Afon Alaw estuary, as well as the seagrass beds, sand and rock found in Beddmanarch Bay.
Very strong tidal currents and wave climate around the Skerries in the north, with a more sheltered region of water within Holyhead Harbour to the south.
Many wrecks , including the protected wreck of the 17th century Royal Yacht <i>Mary</i> and the dangerous wreck of the <i>Castillian</i> , which sank in 1943 with live ordnance on board.
Breakwaters, beacons and lit shipping markers mark passage into the 19 th century Holyhead Harbour. The Skerries lighthouse is visible over long distances.
The wider bay is used by many different types of shipping for transport and trade – a long-standing use, particularly associated with close connections to Ireland.
Waters support a range of recreational activities including sailing, boating, diving and fishing/sightseeing charters. The surrounding beaches are popular tourism destinations.
Seascape setting dominated by the Skerries to the north, and by Holyhead Mountain to the south.
Coastline traversed by the Isle of Anglesey Coastal Path , with large sections under National Trust ownership.
A strong contrast between remote seas and coasts and the bustling port and marina at Holyhead .
Ferries (Holyhead- Dublin) are features on the seaward horizon. The Wicklow and Mourne Mountains in Ireland can be visible in clear conditions. The Isle of Man is also visible in distant views north from Carmel Head.

Natural Influences

This MCA encompasses the west and north-westerly orientated Holyhead Bay. Its long adjacent coastline stretches from Carmel Head in the north to Porth Namarch on Holy Island to the south-west. The rocky islets of the Skerries are located nearly three kilometres offshore from the north-west of Carmel Head. Apart from development at Holyhead, the entire coastline is within the Anglesey AONB. The Holyhead Mountain coast and the coastline from Church Bay to Carmel Head (including the Skerries) are also defined as Heritage Coast.

The west-facing coastline comprises rugged cliffs of volcanic tuff, with jagged spurs jutting out between sandy beaches and bays. Ancient pre-Cambrian rocks, transformed by extreme heating and compression from later earth movements, create a distinctive and varied topography (including the famous 'Carmel Head thrust' – SSSI designated). The orange/red cliffs backing the beach at Church Bay are used as natural navigational features due to their visual prominence from the sea. Topping the cliffs are swathes of wind-pruned maritime grassland and coastal heath, with patches of gorse and sweeping expanses of blackthorn complementing the dark, muted colours of the volcanic cliffs. Colonies of seabirds, including chough, Atlantic tern and fulmars bring movement and sound to the cliffs. To the south-west, the Holy Island Coast is of international importance for its seabird colonies; a national stronghold for chough and home to guillemots, razorbills, puffin, peregrine and ravens.

An open expanse of intertidal sand and mudflats fringing the Afon Alaw estuary defines the south-east of the MCA. Variety and texture is added by swathes of saltmarsh and seagrass beds which extend into Beddmanach Bay. SSSI-designated, these habitats support a wide range of wintering water-birds, especially ringed plover, greenshank, red-breasted merganser and goldeneye. There are areas of rare dune heathland and the whole site supports a range in scarce plants such as sea lavender, dwarf rush and golden samphire.



Survey boat near the Skerries

Holyhead Bay itself ranges in depth from shallow coastal and intertidal waters hugging the coast to an average of 25 metres bathymetry on its westerly fringes. The seabed is gently undulating, composed of schist bedrock overlain by Holocene-derived sand and gravel

sediments and rock outcrops. A rocky seabed is particularly associated with the waters surrounding the Skerries and Holyhead Mountain. Here, the submerged rocks and reefs – often lying close to the water surface – combine with strong tidal streams and wind exposure to create wild and unpredictable seas. Within the bay itself, localised dangers are associated with the rocky seas and overfalls surrounding Carmel Rocks and the Langdon Ridge – the latter marked by a white flashing light and a pillar cardinal mark.

The volcanic rock islets of the Skerries are encircled by strong currents and large breaking waves. The islands' lighthouse is visible over long distances, used in conjunction with other nearby land and sea markers (including the distinctive 'White Ladies' pilot beacons on Carmel Head, MCA 6) to guide safe navigation. The Skerries are designated as SPA, SSSI and Important Bird Area, managed as a reserve by the RSPB. These designations reflect the internationally important population of Arctic terns found on the islets, as well as their role as valued haul sites for grey seals. A number of maritime habitats also contribute to the Skerries' special interest, including maritime grassland, inter-tidal rocks and pools and low maritime cliff with associated ledges and crevices. The species-rich sediment-floored rock pools are of particular interest.

Contrasting sea conditions prevail in the south of the MCA. As well as the physical mass of Holyhead Mountain to the south-west, the long, historic breakwater shelters Holyhead harbour and marina from the open and exposed seas. The Cliperau rocks to the east of the Outer Harbour formed hazards for vessels driven from their anchors; Newry Beach and Penrhos beach were traditionally used by vessels in distress for beaching. Since its completion in the late 19th century the harbour has provided valuable refuge to many – accessible in all weather and tide conditions. The distinctive black and white lighthouse on the end of the breakwater, along with the Holyhead Mail Pier Light on Salt Island, form prominent historic markers for pilotage. Numerous shipping buoys and flashing lights provide further guides to the many commercial and recreational vessels that visit the harbour, day and night.

Cultural/social influences

This is a landscape of present-day cultural contrasts – from some of the most remote coastline in Wales at Carmel Head to the bustling harbour and marina at Holyhead. A diverse range of coastal and marine activities have shaped the seascape over the centuries, all responding to the strategic position of the bay, its challenging marine environment, and the natural resources it offers.

The MCA is recognised as a key historic gateway and trading route between the UK and Ireland, with ferry services retaining important links across the Irish Sea to Ireland (as well as forming large-scale, moving features within the bay). The Romans appreciated the bay's strategic importance, building a fort and naval base on the edge of today's harbour to defend Anglesey from Irish Sea pirates. The walls of the fort are still visible as evidence of this early defensive function.

Thousands of years later, in the mid-19th century, construction began on Holyhead Harbour – stimulated by the need for refuge by ships unable to reach Liverpool in adverse weather conditions. The breakwater is the longest in the UK at nearly three kilometres, with a promenade leading to the unusual square lighthouse on the end – the shape chosen to make the living quarters more comfortable. Around 1,300 men were employed to build the breakwater, using seven million tons of limestone from Holyhead Mountain (now the aptly named Breakwater Country Park).



Skerries Lighthouse

Another important historical landmark that reinforces Holyhead's maritime history is the Grade II Listed Holyhead Mail Pier Light on Salt Island. Constructed by John Rennie in 1821, it is the second oldest lighthouse in Wales and remains a charismatic day marker even though the light is no longer operational.

The exploitation of the MCA's marine and coastal resources has also fuelled the prosperity and development of the area over centuries. Carmel Head includes disused shafts, a chimney and historic buildings associated with Carmel Head Mine, a small copper works first established in the mid-18th century. The mine was sold in the 1860s and abandoned soon after because of poor yields, despite the rich mineral fault lying below the headland. Immediately to the south the coastline is dominated by traces of ancient cultivation and farmsteads, linked to traditional landing places in the lee of Fydlyn Island and Porth y Nant. A long history of fishing in the bay's waters is evidenced by the well-preserved remains of a medieval fish weir on the banks at Newlands (a Scheduled Monument). Further historical fishtraps are revealed at low tide within Beddmanarch Bay, and the Welsh name for Church Bay – Porth Swtan – means '*bay of the whiting*' – after the species of fish common in the local waters¹. Today the marine area continues to support local fishing communities as well as recreational angling. The rocky seabed is particularly important for crab and lobster potting. All of the area is licenced for oil and gas exploration and a number of submarine cables cross the seabed, making landfall at Holyhead.

Turning to the Skerries, their name is thought to derive from the English word 'skerry' ('rock') but it possibly has its origins in the Scandinavian word 'sker', meaning '*stretch of rocks, reef*' reflecting its role as a landmark for Viking voyagers from Ireland. The original and modern Welsh name, however, is Ynysoedd y Moelrhoniaid, meaning '*the islands of bald-headed grey seals*'. The islands were once the property of the bishops of Bangor who had fishing rights for the surrounding seas, but are often most strongly associated with ship wrecks.

¹ Conversely the English name – Church Bay – is likely to reflect the prominent offshore view of St Rhuddlad's church spire, a key local landmark for sea navigators.

The islands' reputation as a notorious wrecking site is reflected in the concentration of sunken vessels found beneath its waters. The nationally protected Royal Yacht *Mary* is located on the south west side of the islands. Built by the Dutch East India Company in 1660, it was embellished and given by the City of Amsterdam to Charles II on his restoration to the English throne. The *Mary* was en-route from Dublin to Chester with a crew of 28, three noblemen and 43 other passengers when it sank in 1675. Rediscovered in 1971, the wreck has been extensively excavated, the associated artefacts, such as fine jewellery and cutlery, taken to Merseyside museums. The finding of the Royal Yacht *Mary* and the subsequent ill-controlled salvage and removal of guns from the wreck prompted the hasty passing of the 1971 Protection of Wrecks Act, the principal legislation by which historic vessels are now protected. Nearby, the *SS Castilian* is marked as a dangerous wreck, sinking in 1943 with live ordnance on board. The only means of access to the Skerries is by boat - an old supply bridge from Anglesey has long since been removed. Recreational boat trips to the islets are available from several ports in Anglesey, including Holyhead and Cemaes Bay (MCA 6). The potential for harnessing the sea's high energy resources in this location is being explored through test tidal stream devices.

As well as its long-standing commercial importance, Holyhead Bay is a regional hub for recreational sailing and boating. Holyhead Marina currently provides space for around 200 berth-holders, with infrastructure for 350 berths. Combined with linked modern developments and shoreline facilities, the marina generates a significant influence on the local seascape, prominent in views from the sea when entering the harbour. The marina supports a number of sea-based recreational activities across Anglesey, such as sailing, boating, sea canoeing/kayaking, diving (including to popular wreck diving spots off Carmel Head), surfing, fishing and tourist boat trips. A number of organised sailing events and races start and/or end at Holyhead, such as the Celtic Goodwill Raid and Gaffers Sailing Event. The marina also functions as a research hub for wildlife and conservation, with specialist dive surveys frequently departing from the facility. Holyhead Coastguard Station is located by the marina, providing a designated Rescue Centre for the local area. Practice sessions (e.g. helicopter-based boat rescues) are frequently held in the open waters of Holyhead Bay.

The coastline's beaches with designated bathing waters are popular tourism draws, particularly in the summer, with nearby caravan and camping sites providing close access for staying visitors. The Isle of Anglesey Coastal Path – part of the Wales Coast Path – rewards users with spectacular views across the bay, the surrounding coasts and further out to the Irish Sea. Significant areas of coast under National Trust ownership create further access and enjoyment opportunities for informal recreation.

Aesthetic and perceptual qualities

Perceptual qualities vary markedly across the MCA, owing to the differing degrees of human activity (with seasonal variations) as well as the natural influences of the sea and prevailing weather conditions. Outside the harbour breakwater, the whole of the bay is open to westerly and northerly weather conditions sweeping in from the Irish Sea. In stormy conditions the nationally designated coastal landscape is pounded by powerful waves, a sense of danger arising from complete exposure to the elements. The black volcanic rocks comprising much of the adjacent AONB-designated coastline reinforce a feeling of bleakness, enhanced when exposed to the full brunt of the weather sweeping in from the Irish Sea. In all weather conditions, a strong degree of tranquillity, remoteness and relative wildness pervades away from the bustling port of Holyhead. These qualities decline at a local level during busy summer periods, with more movement and people in the wider landscape and occupying the coastal caravan parks in the south-east of the bay (featuring prominently in landward views from within the bay).

Around Holyhead, human influence dominates – both on the water and along the shoreline, with high levels of movement and activity from marine traffic and activities, as well as associated noise and visual disturbance – including at night. The tall chimney stack at the former Anglesey Aluminium works forms a major landmark feature in views, standing in stark contrast to the nearby expanses of flat, open naturalistic habitat within Beddmanarch Bay. The scale of infrastructure and the frequent moving and stationary ferries create an overall large scale character, forming a dominant presence visible from across Holyhead Bay and the western coastline of Anglesey. Nevertheless, Holyhead Mountain provides a dramatic setting behind, adding a sense of scale to the town and port below.

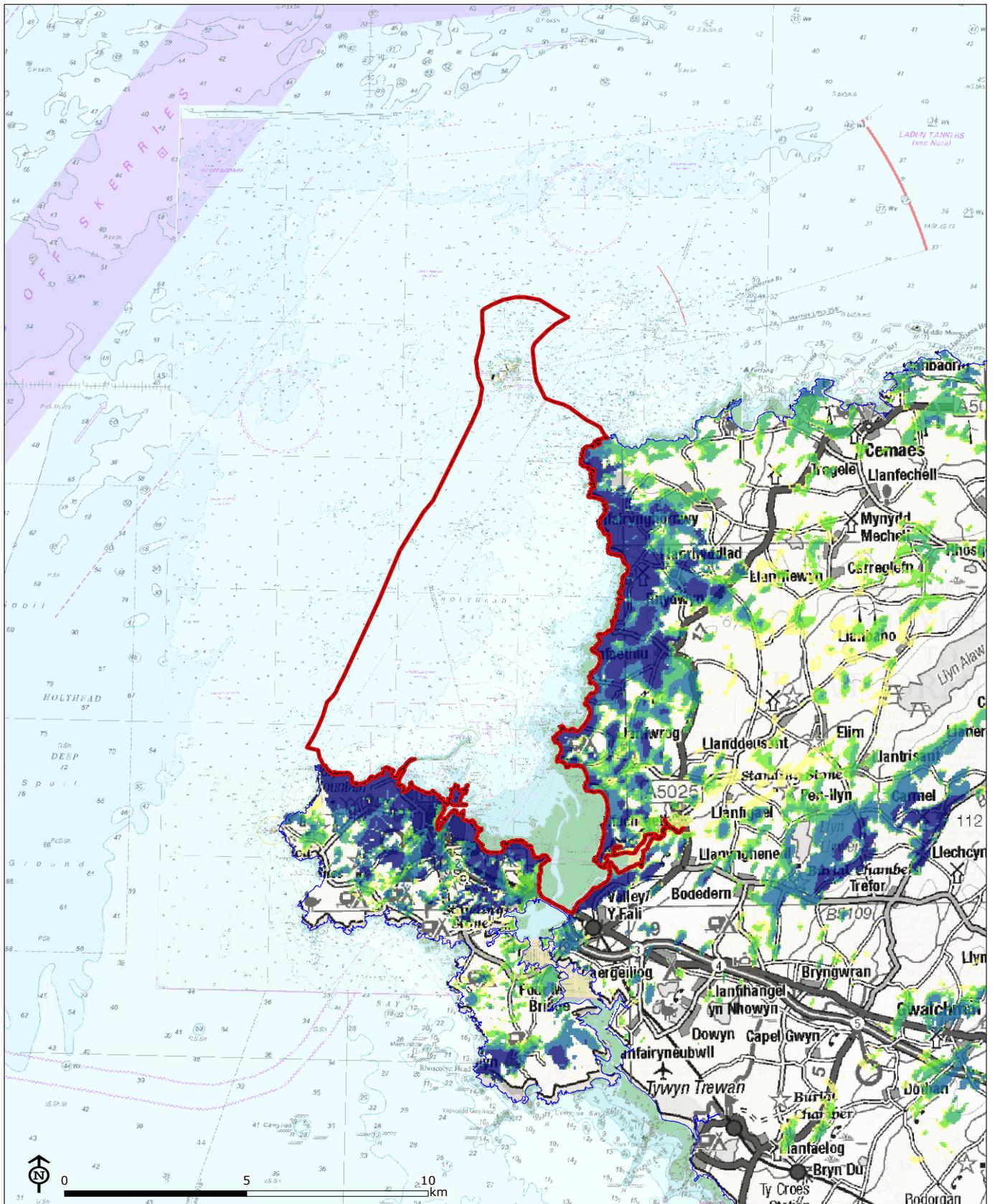
Offshore, the Skerries form an extremely remote and wild seascape, with a high degree of exposure. Big waves and sweeping winds create a tempestuous and noisy seascape, generating further feelings of vulnerability and isolation. The location and relative inaccessibility of the rocky islets only reached by chartered boat, further enhances their mysterious qualities. They form a strong maritime setting to the north of Holyhead Bay, the flashing light of the tall lighthouse featuring in views from across the coastline, with particularly strong intervisibility with Carmel Head.

Landward views are relatively contained to the western coastline and rising backdrop of Anglesey and Holy Island, whilst open, expansive views are afforded out to sea (MCAs 5 and 8). The Isle of Man is visible in distant views north from Carmel Head, whilst the westerly views from elevated positions, including Holyhead Mountain, can be framed by the distance shapes of the Wicklow and Mourne Mountains in Ireland.

The Visual Resource Maps (VRM) that follow provide a more detailed spatial representation of the visibility of this MCA from the surrounding land in Wales. Please refer to the technical report for an explanation of how these maps were generated and how they should be interpreted.

The first map shows land with views to this MCA, the darker shading indicating land where from which more of this MCA is visible.

The second map shows sea visible from land, the warmer colours being areas of sea that are visible from more places on land. This comes from a national assessment of Wales so the results do not relate specifically to this MCA, whose boundary is overlaid for location only. The four individual versions show how the results vary depending on how far inland hypothetical viewers are located.



- 07: Holyhead Bay and The Skerries
- Wales Inshore Marine Plan Area

Land with sea views (Percentile)

- < 20 (Lowest)
- 21 - 40
- 41 - 60
- 61 - 80
- 81 - 100 (Highest)



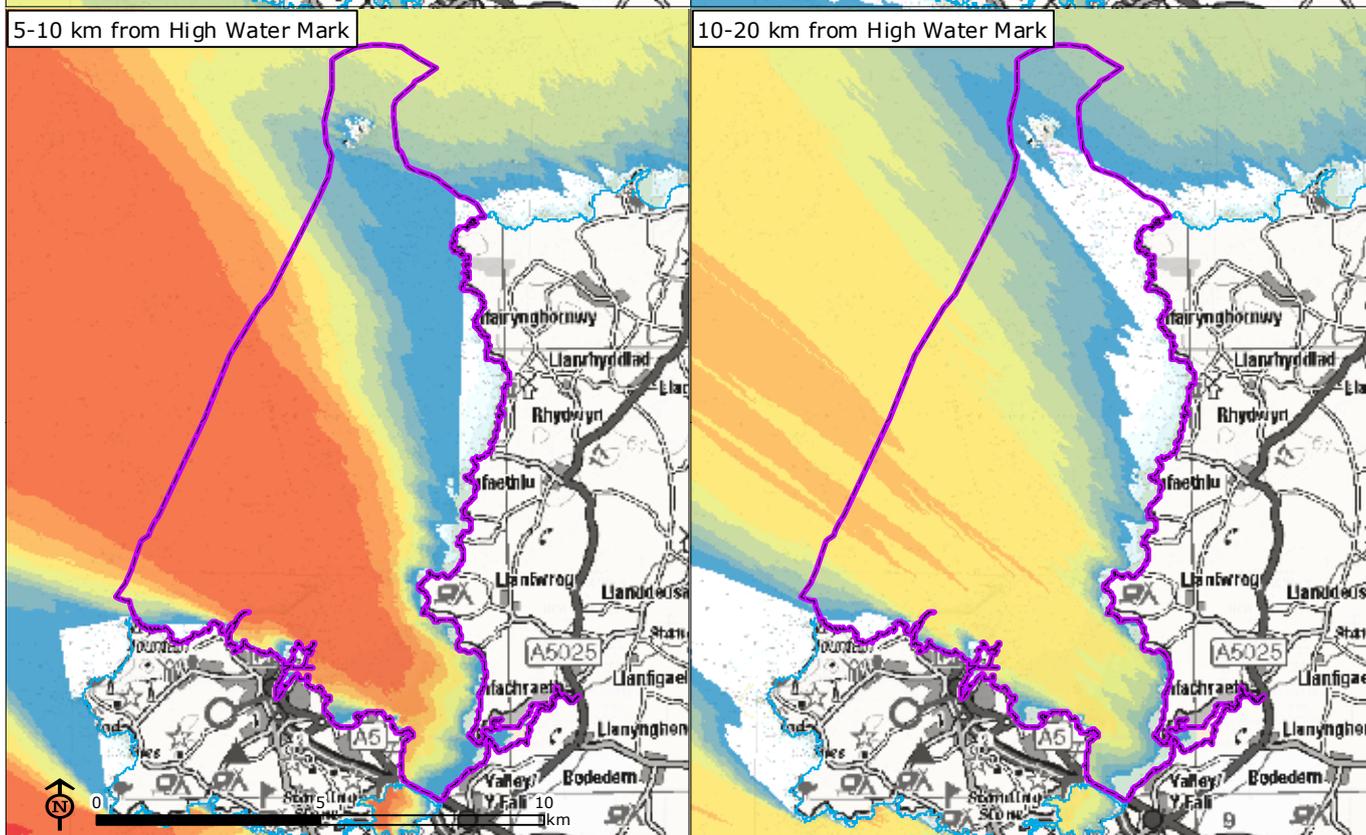
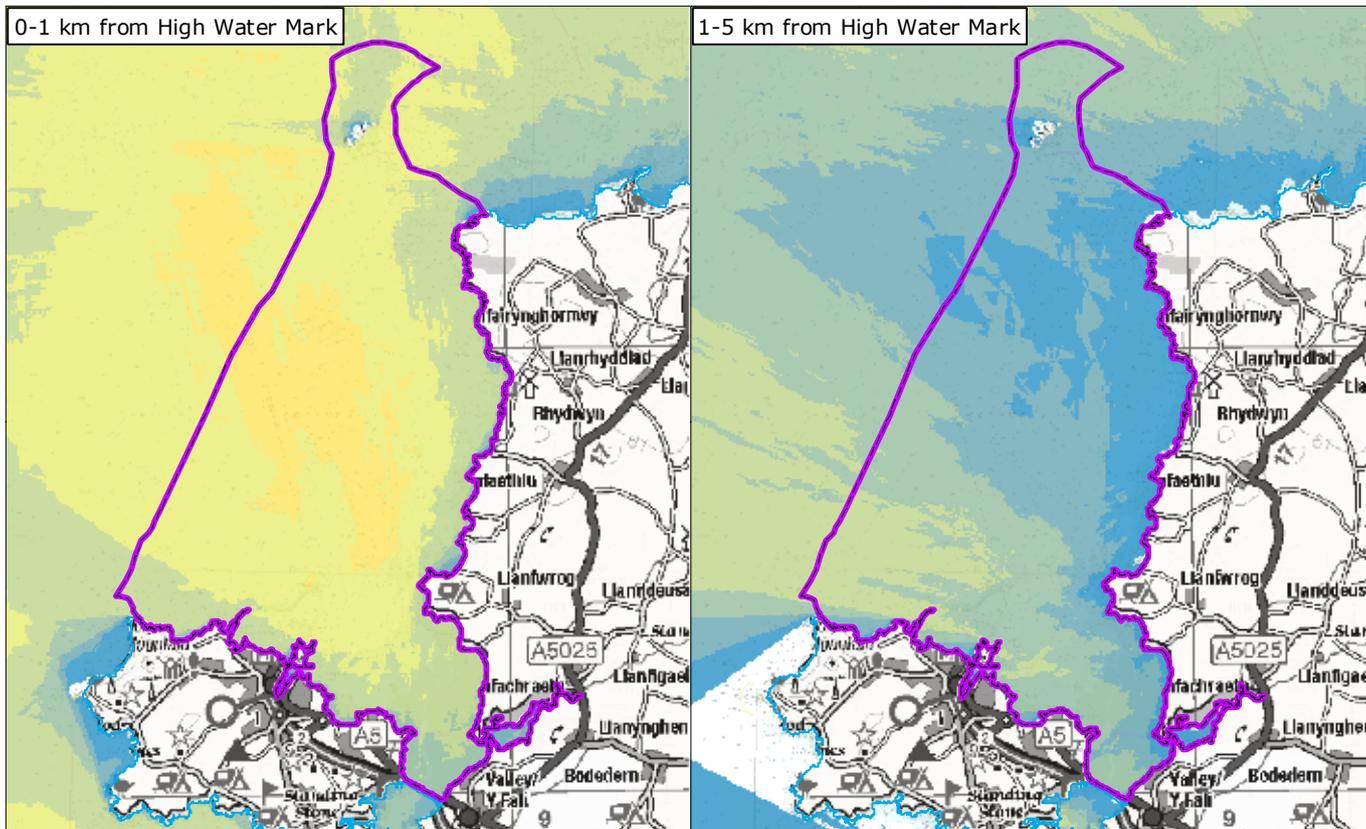
Wales National Seascape Assessment

**Land with Views of:
MCA 07: Holyhead Bay
and The Skerries**

Source: LUC, NRW, OceanWise



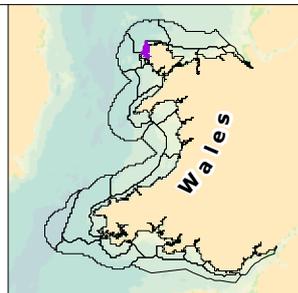
Map Scale @ A4: 1:150,000



- 07: Holyhead Bay and The Skerries
- Wales Inshore Marine Plan Area

Visibility of sea from land (percentile)

	<10 (Lowest)		51-60
	11-20		61-70
	21-30		71-80
	31-40		81-90
	41-50		91-100 (Highest)



Wales National Seascape Assessment

Relative Visibility of the Sea Surface from Viewers on Land
MCA 07: Holyhead Bay and The Skerries



Map Scale @ A4: 1:170,000

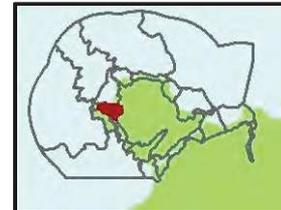
SEASCAPE CHARACTER AREA 11:

HOLYHEAD

Component LCAs (Anglesey): Holy Island; Inland Sea; North-west Anglesey

Location and Context

SCA 11 Holyhead is located on the western coast of Anglesey and is centred on the town and port of Holyhead. . It is bordered to the west by SCA 13 Holyhead Mountain, to the south by SCA 12 Inland Sea and SCA 14 Rhoscolyn, and to the north by SCA 10 Carmel Head to Penrhyn.



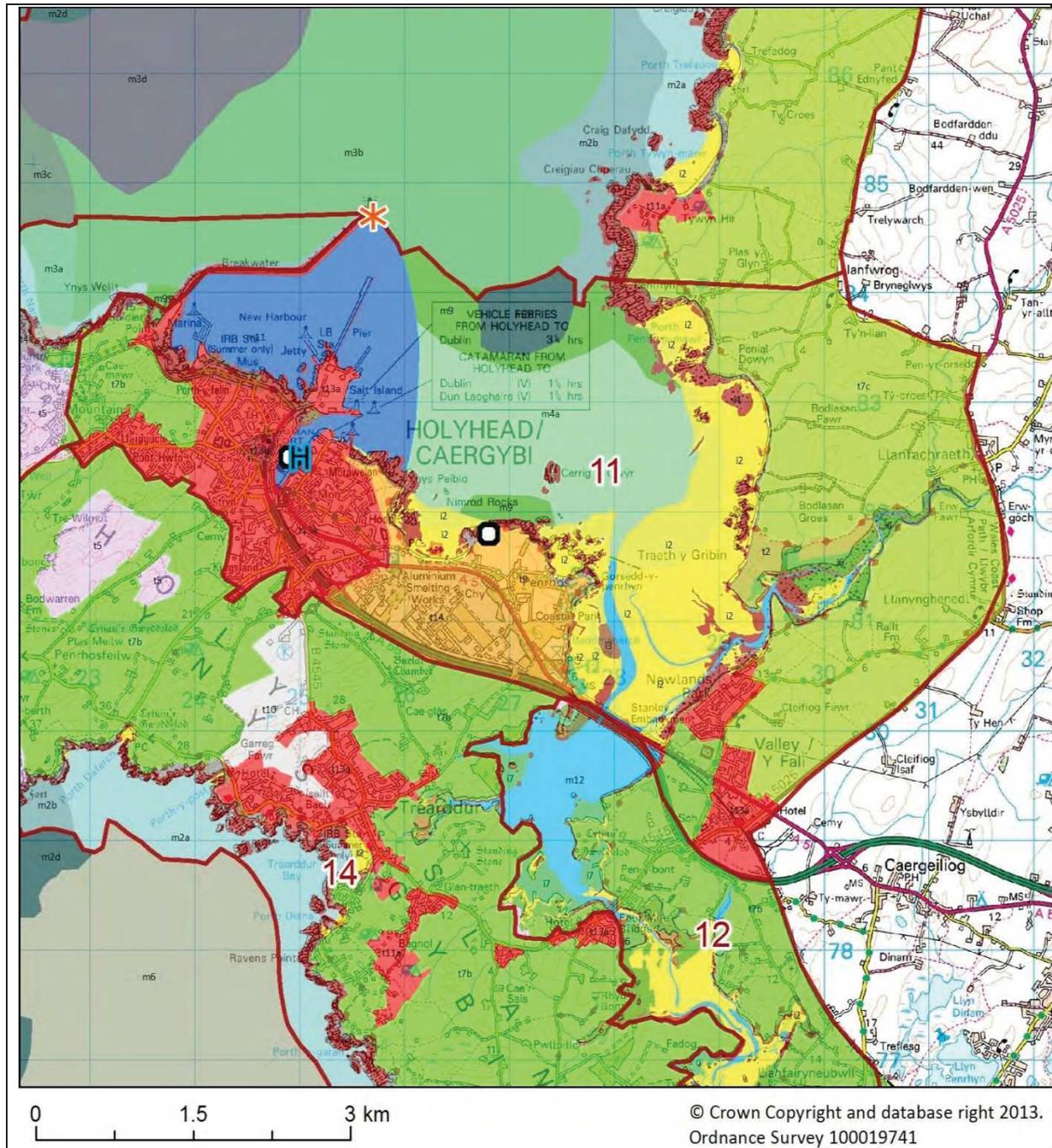
Holyhead port, town and harbour as seen from Holyhead Mountain. Image © Fiona Fyfe

Summary Description

This SCA is characterised by its relatively high level of development (in the Holyhead and Valley areas) and the influence of Holyhead Port. It has many centuries of maritime history, the earliest evidence of which is a Roman fort. Today, views of the port are dominated by the long breakwaters, large ships (including the Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ferries), cranes, walkways, and many colours and sizes of smaller craft. It is a settled and busy environment, and at night its coloured lights become apparent. Holyhead mountain rises above the town, forming a backdrop and setting. Its rocky profile and wild, heather-covered appearance contrasts with the built structures of the town and port below. The chimney of the aluminium smelter is a prominent local landmark.

Constituent Seascape Character Types

Please refer to Appendix I for a list of constituent Seascape Character Types.



Seascape Character Types in the Holyhead SCA.

Key Characteristics

- Underlain by Cambrian and Ordovician rocks, with occasional igneous intrusions, especially in the south of the SCA.
- Landform generally low-lying, and marine areas relatively shallow with extensive intertidal areas and rocky islands. Large areas of intertidal sands in the Traeth Y Gribin area.
- Wave and tidal patterns modified by harbour breakwaters and A5/A 55 causeway across the Inland Sea.
- Extensive harbour, port, town and industrial land uses in western part of LCA; farmland and estuary in eastern part. Bay used by many different types of shipping.
- Extensive Intertidal habitats around shoreline, including the Aber Alaw estuary.
- Numerous onshore historic and cultural features reflecting the area's long history of transport, defence and trade. The chimney of the aluminium works is a prominent local landmark.
- Offshore historic and cultural features associated with development of the port, harbour and marina, including breakwaters, lighthouses, beacons and other infrastructure.
- A well-settled and developed area with extensive commercial, industrial, residential and leisure development resulting from the importance of Holyhead as a trading and ferry port.
- A complex and busy area, both on land and at sea, visually enclosed by the surrounding headlands and therefore relatively inward-looking.
- Landscape setting dominated by the impressive, rugged outline of Holyhead Mountain to the west. To the east, low-lying farmland provides a less dramatic setting.
- Seascape setting strongly influenced by harbour infrastructure (breakwaters, navigation lights etc) and shipping. Skerries visible in the distance on northern horizon.



Holyhead port and mountain as seen from Dublin Ferry. Image © Jonathan Porter



Harbour and marina with breakwater forming the horizon. Image © Fiona Fyfe



Holyhead port at night. Image © Fiona Fyfe

Cultural Benefits and Services

Key: Bold shading = widespread; medium shading = localised; no shading = occasional

Leisure, recreation & tourism	Health	Heritage	Education	Religious & spiritual
Watersports	Relaxation	Natural	Informal	Spiritual
Active	Exercise	Cultural	Formal	Religious
Beach				
Exploring				

Natural Influences and sites

- The sheltered location of the harbour, combined with artificial breakwaters and other structures result in a very sheltered, muddy environment with extensive areas of inter-tidal sand at Traeth y Gribon.
- Processes of sediment erosion and deposition affected by dredging.
- Natural processes responding to turbulence from boats, and modifications by man-made structures such as harbour piers, breakwaters, and the Stanley Embankment carrying the A5 and railway across the Inland Sea.
- Extensive SSSI (Beddmanarch-Cymyran) covering intertidal areas, including the Afon Alaw estuary, and the seagrass bed, sand and rock in Beddmanach Bay.
- Designated RIGS sites at Penial Dowyn, Penrhos Drumlin, and Holyhead Roman fort and Medieval churches.
- Harbour structures and mooring buoys provide solid substrate for a wide variety of algae and animals e.g. anemones and ascidians. This is the only location in Wales where the non-native seasquirt *Didemnum vexillum* has been found. This has undergone a programme of eradication by CCW (now NRW).

Cultural Influences and sites

- Numerous defensive sites including Caer Gybi Roman Fort (Scheduled Monument), Napoleonic War battery at Penrhos, Soldiers Point, and WW2 pillbox defences around the harbour.
- Sites associated with transport, trade and recreation (still in use today) including old harbour and many buildings in the town. Reflected in Conservation Area status of Central Holyhead and Newry Beach. Key to the development of Holyhead as a port was the mail and packet service to Ireland.
- Large industrial site of Anglesey Aluminium located to the east of Holyhead, with tall chimney stack a major landmark feature in views.
- Intertidal archaeology on the eastern side of the SCA includes submerged forest/ intertidal peats between Peniel and Bodardreath and the spectacular fish trap at Newlands. Further fishtraps may be seen at Beddmanarch Bay.
- Afon Alaw navigable by small wooden boats as far as the limekiln at Ty Newydd until relatively recently. Transhipment may have been undertaken at Penrhynbach/ Pen Morfa, where a possible large storehouse remains visible.
- Penrhos Coastal Park in grounds of former Penrhos estate, including the re-positioned toll-house designed by Thomas Telford for the London to Holyhead road.

- Settlement of Valley originally a camp for workers building the Stanley Embankment in 1820s. Valley foundry was located at the eastern end of the Stanley Embankment.
- Harbour breakwater the longest in the UK, with unusual square lighthouse. Constructed in mid-nineteenth Century as a refuge for ships unable to reach Liverpool in bad weather conditions. Stone for breakwater quarried from Holyhead Mountain (now Breakwater Country Park, SCA 13). Within the outer refuge harbour, disabled vessels could be run ashore on a specially-prepared beaching slope.
- Development of the town for tourism from the mid Nineteenth Century onwards.
- The Platters and Skinners Rock form navigational hazards for ships entering the outer refuge harbour.
- Popular recreational dive site at Newry Beach, where divers can see the regionally rare sea pen s.
- Partially within Anglesey Coast AONB.

Perceptual Qualities

- A relatively inward-looking area, surrounded by landform and – on the seaward site- by the harbour breakwater. Within this are structures and landforms of many different scales.
- A diverse area, characterised by its movement and busy, developed feel.
- A wide variety of forms (e.g. strong verticals of aluminium works chimney and port gantries; strong horizontals of jetties and breakwaters) textures (e.g. water, rocks, intertidal areas) and colours (e.g. boats, containers, flags)
- Development, movement, noise, people and lights result in a lack of tranquillity, remoteness or wildness within the settlements of this SCA. The non-developed parts of the coast (notably the Aber Alaw estuary) are relatively calm and peaceful with a much greater sense of timelessness.
- Holyhead Mountain (immediately adjacent to the west) provides a wild and imposing setting and adds a sense of scale to the town and port below.

Forces for Change

Summary	Key forces for change						
	Special Qualities						
	Natural processes/ climate change	Visitor pressure	Marine use- commercial and fishing	Offshore energy or minerals	Development pressure/ transport routes	Land management changes	MOD use
Ongoing development of Holyhead Port and expansion of the town, including industrial and residential development and associated lighting. Proposed waterside development at Newry will potentially affect the open character of the area and reduce public access to the waterfront.							
Proposed holiday village development at Penrhos Coastal Park.							
Seasonal visitor pressure, particularly at popular coastal sites.							
Agricultural/ land management changes, potentially affecting the character of the periphery and setting of the SCA.							
Flood risk (exacerbated by sea level rise) associated with discharging river at Porth-y-felin and low lying land surrounding the mouth of the Afon Alaw.							
	Key	Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality					

Inherent Sensitivity

Theme	Factors making the area more sensitive	Factors making the area less sensitive
Coastal geometry and landform	<p>High coastal peak of Holyhead mountain is a visual backdrop to the area.</p> <p>Views out to sea from bays framed by surrounding headlands and breakwaters.</p>	
Existing development	Character of historic harbour and associated buildings and transport routes.	Presence of existing development and port infrastructure, including breakwaters.
The visual experience	<p>Setting of Holyhead Mountain (SCA 13) contributes to character of SCA.</p> <p>SCA often experienced from the sea, as well as from land.</p> <p>Elevated views looking across and down on the SCA from surrounding high land to the west, and from across the bay.</p>	<p>Industrial character of parts of SCA, due to scale of port development and presence of large aluminium smelting works.</p> <p>Marinas, esplanade, sailing club etc. give parts of the SCA a recreational character.</p> <p>Views seaward often contain boats of many types and sizes.</p>
Tranquillity	Much of the coastline on the Anglesey side is relatively undeveloped, and with extensive inter-tidal areas, is more tranquil.	Settlements contain developed areas, busy all year round and especially in summer.

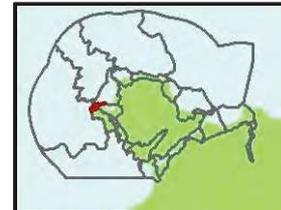
SEASCAPE CHARACTER AREA 13:

HOLYHEAD MOUNTAIN

Component LCAs (Anglesey): Holyhead Mountain

Location and Context

The Holyhead Mountain SCA lies in the extreme west of Anglesey. It comprises the coastal heathland of Holyhead Mountain (which rises to 220m) and the associated cliffs and islets, including South Stack and its lighthouse. Three seascape character areas lie off the coast: SCA10 Carmel Head to Penrhyn to the north; SCA30 North-west of Anglesey to the north-west and SCA 31 West of Anglesey to the west. SCA 11 Holyhead is to the east and SCA 14 Rhoscolyn is to the south.



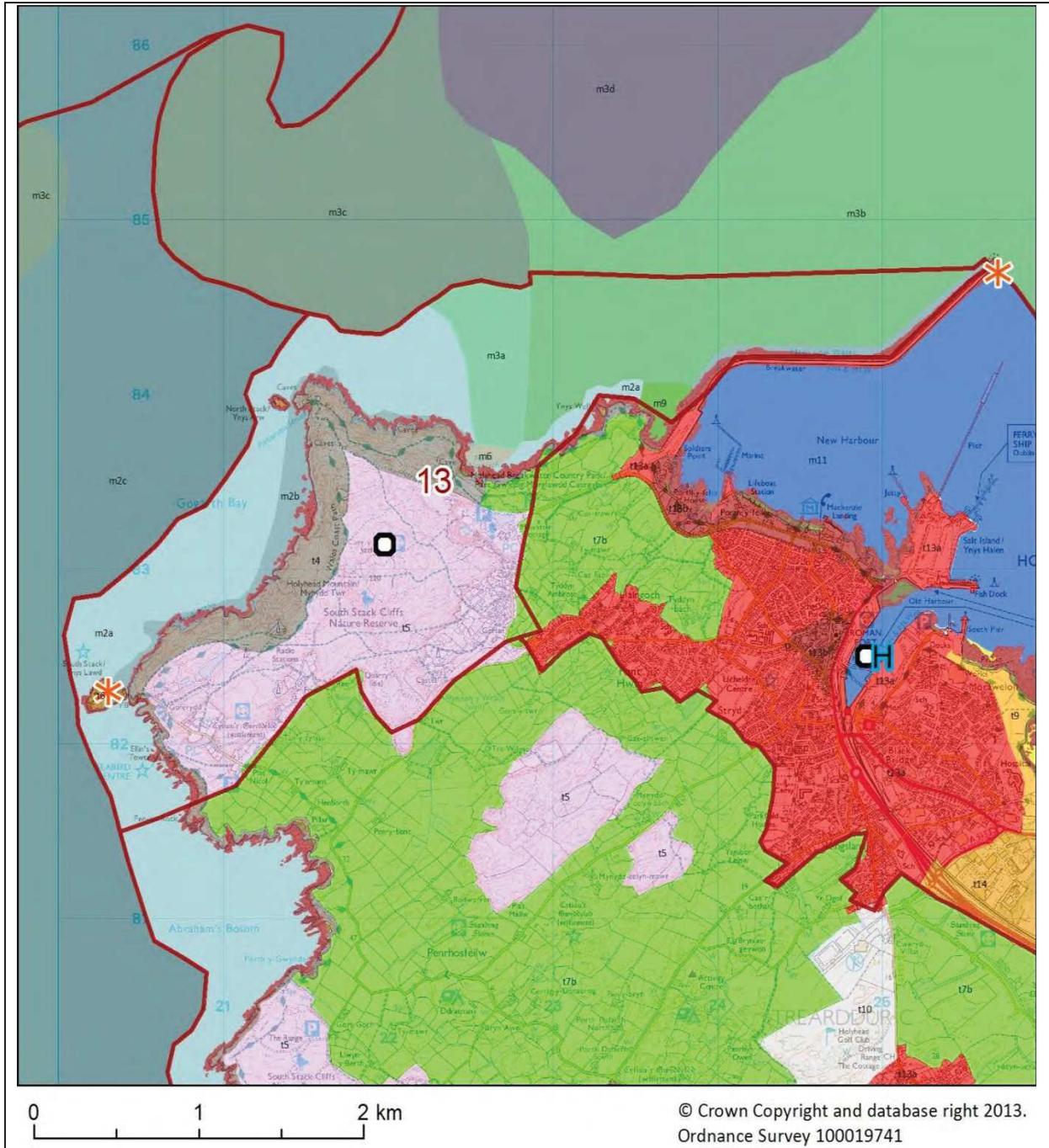
View south from Holyhead Mountain showing cliffs and coastal heath at Gogarth Bay. Image ©Fiona Fyfe

Summary Description

The high, rugged profile of Holyhead Mountain rises sharply from the sea at the north-west tip of Anglesey. It is a prominent and distinctive landmark from land and from approaching shipping, and over the years has been used as a hillfort, watchtower and signal station. The high cliffs and white water create a dramatic and dangerous coastline, and the lighthouse at South Stack is still in use. The mountain forms an important setting to the town and port of Holyhead below. Holyhead Mountain comprises the largest single expanse of coastal heath on Anglesey, and contains a mosaic of heather, bracken, gorse and grassland, as well as the unique *spatulate fleawort*. The colours of vegetation change throughout the year, with purple heather and yellow gorse being a particularly dramatic combination. The SCA supports many different species of sea birds, and has a tranquil, wild and remote quality, despite its proximity to Holyhead. It is popular with visitors who come to admire the panoramic views and the wildlife.

Constituent Seascape Character Types

Please refer to Appendix I for a list of constituent Seascape Character Types.



Seascape Character Types in the Holyhead Mountain SCA.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying geology of Cambrian quartzite. Dramatic folding visible, for example at South Stack.
- Land rises sharply to 220m at the summit (the highest point on Anglesey). Dramatic juxtaposition of mountain dropping steeply into the open sea, with the sea shelving steeply away from the shore.
- A high-energy wave environment, with full force of south-westerly waves battering high cliffs and rocky islands. White water and eddies occur at bases of cliffs.
- Onshore land use is coastal heath, managed for nature conservation and tourism. Dangerous marine environment limits offshore activities.
- Nationally-important coastal heath habitats supporting rare species of plants and birds. High cliffs are habitats for nesting sea birds.
- Archaeological sites associated with defence include Iron Age hillfort and Roman watchtower. Also hut circles, communications masts, signal station and quarrying legacy.
- Offshore historic and cultural features include South Stack lighthouse and bridge (now a tourist attraction).
- Very limited settlement or development. Visitors' centres and car parks at South Stack, and Breakwater Country Park.
- An exceptionally open, exposed and elevated landscape, with panoramic views over the sea and Anglesey. Sense of tranquillity, wildness and remoteness, despite the proximity to Holyhead town and port.
- Landscape setting of surrounding lower-lying farmland, and the town of Holyhead, with distant views across to Snowdonia in the east.
- Surrounded by open sea, with Holyhead harbour a feature in the foreground to the east, and the Llyn Peninsula on the southern seaward horizon.



Quartzite rock on Holyhead Mountain. Image ©Fiona Fyfe



Remains of building (possible site of signal cannon) and summit.

Image ©Fiona Fyfe



South Stack Lighthouse from the sea. Image ©Bangor University

Cultural Benefits and Services

Key: Bold shading = widespread; medium shading = localised; no shading = occasional

Leisure, recreation & tourism	Health	Heritage	Education	Religious & spiritual
Active	Relaxation	Natural	Informal	Spiritual
Exploring	Exercise	Cultural	Formal	Religious
Ecotourism				

Natural Influences and sites

- Cambrian quartzites comprise exceptionally hard ancient rocks (some of the oldest in Britain). Designated RIGS sites include South Stack, Holyhead Breakwater Country Park, Porth Namarch and Soldiers' Pont Bay.
- Coastal erosive processes creating dramatic cliff scenery including stacks.
- RSPB Nature Reserve at South Stack RSPB, and Breakwater Country Park, providing car parking and access.
- Rare *Spatulate Fleawort* plant unique to this SCA.
- Extensive coastal heath and cliff habitats designated SSSI (Holy Island Coast), SPA and SAC. Marine environment supports porpoises and seals, which bask on the rocks.
- Designated Heritage Coast.
- Marine habitat of tide-swept bedrock around the headlands of North and South Stack. Bedrock and boulders dominated by animals such as sponges, anemones and seasquirts, particularly within surge gullies and on vertical walls.

Cultural Influences and sites

- Caer Y Twr Iron-Age hillfort, Prehistoric hut circles and Roman watchtower (all Scheduled Monuments)
- Long association with communication, shown in old signal station (part of Holyhead- Liverpool Telegraph which allowed ships to communicate their arrival or loss information to the Underwriters' Room at Liverpool) as well as more recent communications masts.
- Cliff top cannon (now in Country Park) fired to warn vessels which were too close to the shore. The Magazine survives near North Stack.
- South Stack lighthouse (established 1809) and footbridge connecting the stack to the shore.
- Shipwrecks include the *Matilda* (1853) returning from Africa to Liverpool, and stranded near South Stack in thick fog, and the steamship *Harold* (1908).
- WW2 Aircraft wreck of Vickers Wellington DV442 near South Stack, which crashed whilst waiting to land at RAF Valley.
- Holyhead Mountain Conservation Area.
- Quarry on north coast used as a source of stone for construction of Holyhead harbour breakwater (now part of Breakwater Country Park). The industrial landscape also includes the quarry tramway, two large limekilns and a powder magazine. The quarry was reused as a rifle range in the late Nineteenth Century.
- Within Anglesey Coast AONB.

Perceptual Qualities

- An open and exposed landscape with a strong sense of elevation and panoramic views. On very clear evenings, the Wicklow Hills in Ireland can be seen from the summit.
- Homogenous in character: coastal heath and cliffs with few other features, although communications masts interrupt the skyline.
- Surface rocks, cliffs and vegetation create a rough texture, with strong seasonal colours from extensive heather, gorse and bracken.
- Strong sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity, despite the presence of Holyhead nearby. Difference in elevation between mountain and town lends a sense of detachment.
- Tranquillity reduced in summer months due to numbers of visitors, and at night due to light pollution from Holyhead.

Forces for Change

Summary	Key forces for change								
Changes in grazing management potentially affecting the composition of valuable coastal heath habitats. Changes in vegetation (particularly growth of bracken and woody shrubs) can also damage archaeology.	Special Qualities	Natural processes/ climate change	Visitor pressure	Marine use- commercial and fishing	Offshore energy or minerals	Development pressure/ transport routes	Land management changes	MOD use	
Seasonal visitor pressure potentially leading to damage of sensitive habitats and archaeology, loss of tranquillity and traffic issues.		Welsh Language							
Visual impacts of existing telecommunications masts on summit.		Diversity of landscapes, including coastal landscape features & expansive views							
Visual impacts of development and lighting in Holyhead port and town affecting the setting of the SCA.		Rural agricultural communities and their associated features							
Natural coastal processes including wave action on cliffs and stacks.		Richness of habitats and biodiversity							
		Cultural heritage							
		Remoteness, tranquillity and wildness							
		Access to land and water and recreation/ enjoyment							
		Geology and geomorphological features							
		Islands							
		Archaeology and history including historic parks and gardens							
		Soil, air and water quality							
		Key	Change occurring in the area affecting the selected special quality						

Inherent Sensitivity

Theme	Factors making the area more sensitive	Factors making the area less sensitive
Coastal geometry and landform	<p>Steep, high cliffs form natural rocky shoreline and associated cliff and coastal heath habitats.</p> <p>Coastal peak and a prominent landmark, visible over land and sea.</p> <p>High land close to the coast forms a distinctive coastal backdrop and skyline.</p>	
Existing development	Very limited development and few roads within the SCA resulting in an undeveloped quality which contrasts with Holyhead below.	Communications masts on summit.
The visual experience	<p>From summit, 180 degree views over land and sea.</p> <p>Users of Wales Coast Path and visitors to Nature Reserve are sensitive receptors.</p> <p>Forms backdrop and setting to town and port of Holyhead.</p>	Views from the SCA include existing development at Holyhead.
Tranquillity	Existing high levels of tranquillity, remoteness and wildness.	Localised reductions in tranquillity due to concentrations of visitors.