

# RECORDING HISTORIC FARMSTEADS

North Anglesey and West Meirionnydd 2022-2023



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

# RECORDING HISTORIC FARMSTEADS

## North Anglesey and West Meirionnydd 2022-23

### Asesiad Wrth Ddesg/Desk Based Assessment 2022-2023

Yr Amgylchedd Hanesyddol yn Cofnodi Prif Gyfeirnod /

Historic Environment Record Event Primary Reference Number: 46608

Rhif Prosiect / Project No. G2496

Rhif Adroddiad/ Report No. 1657

Wedi'i baratoi ar gyfer / Prepared for: Cadw

Mawrth 2023 / March 2023

Ysgrifenydd gan / Written by: Carolina Guimaraes Ferreira

Darluniadau gan/Illustrations by: Carolina Guimaraes Ferreira

Delwedd clawr blaen / Front Cover image: View along western range at Wern-las-deg Farm; view from ENE (archive reference: G2496\_38).

Cyhoeddwyd gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth,  
Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2RT

Published by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust  
Craig Beuno, Garth Road,  
Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2RT

Cadeirydd / Chair David Elis-Williams MA(Oxon), MSc, CPFA  
Prif Archaeolegydd/Chief Archaeologist - Andrew Davidson, BA., MCIfA

Mae Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd yn Gwmni Cyfyngedig (Ref Cof. 1180515) ac yn Elusen (Rhif Cof. 508849)  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust is both a Limited Company (Reg No. 1180515) and a Charity (reg No. 508849)

## Figures

Figure 01: Farmsteads and outfarms located within north Anglesey.

Figure 02: Farmsteads and outfarms located within west Meirionnydd.

Figure 03: Loose courtyard plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey.

Figure 04: Regular courtyard plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey.

Figure 05: Linear plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey.

Figure 06: Dispersed plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey.

Figure 07: L-plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey.

Figure 08: Parallel plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey.

Figure 09: Row plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey.

Figure 10: Covered plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey.

Figure 11: Loose courtyard plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd.

Figure 12: Dispersed plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd.

Figure 13: Linear plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd.

Figure 14: Regular courtyard plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd.

Figure 15: L-plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd.

Figure 16: Parallel plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd.



## Plates

Plate 01: General view of Mynachdy Farm regular courtyard plan; view from SW (archive reference: G2496\_01).

Plate 02: View of northern and western ranges of Mynachdy Farm courtyard; view from SE (archive reference: G2496\_04).

Plate 03: View of corn/grain loft located in the eastern range of Mynachdy Farm courtyard; scale; view from W (archive reference: G2496\_05).

Plate 04: View of farm building used for drying pheasants at Mynachdy Farm; view from NNE (archive reference: G2496\_07).

Plate 05: View of animal housing in a separate field at Mynachdy Farm; view from N (archive reference: G2496\_10).

Plate 06: General view of Caerau Farm secondary regular courtyard; view from S (archive reference: G2496\_14).

Plate 07: View along northern range of Caerau Farm secondary regular courtyard; view from WSW (archive reference: G2496\_17).

Plate 08: General view of Perthi Farm dispersed plan showing cowhouse in background and garage in foreground; view from WNW (archive reference: G2496\_30).

Plate 09: View of surviving Perthi farm buildings; view from ESE (archive reference: G2496\_31).

Plate 10: General view of Wern-las-deg Farm loose courtyard plan; view from SSE (archive reference: G2496\_33).

Plate 11: General view of Cwmcloch-Isaf Farm regular courtyard plan; view from NE (archive reference: G2496\_41).

Plate 12: View of pigsty (left) with 'y gegin foch' in background, and stable and animal shelter at rear of barn (right) at Cwmcloch-Isaf Farm; from W (archive reference: G2496\_43).



## CONTENTS

CONTENTS .....	1
CRYNODEB ANNHECHNEGOL .....	2
NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY .....	2
1 INTRODUCTION.....	3
2 COPYRIGHT.....	4
3 METHODOLOGY.....	5
3.1 Introduction.....	5
3.2 Farmstead Characterisation .....	6
3.3 Fieldwork .....	10
4 RESULTS.....	11
4.1 North Anglesey.....	11
4.1.1 Study area.....	11
4.1.2 Attribute analysis and distribution.....	12
4.2 West Meirionnydd .....	14
4.2.1 Study area.....	14
4.2.2 Attribute analysis and distribution.....	15
4.3 Survival and condition .....	17
5 DISCUSSION .....	18
5.1 The digitisation process .....	18
5.2 Conclusions .....	19
6 REFERENCES .....	21

## **CRYNODEB ANNHECHNEGOL**

*Mae'r prosiect hwn yn rhan o fenter Cymru gyfan sydd wedi'i dylunio i greu set o bolygonau GIS o adeiladau fferm traddodiadol sydd wedi goroesi er mwyn cynhyrchu data ar gyfer cynlluniau amaeth-amgylcheddol nawr ac yn y dyfodol. Mae ail elfen o'r prosiect wedi cynhyrchu cofnod o gymeriad y ffermydd sy'n cynnwys yr adeiladau traddodiadol gan ddilyn y dull a osodwyd mewn dogfen ganllaw a gynhyrchwyd gan English Heritage. Dyfeisiwyd methodoleg gyffredinol gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys mewn astudiaeth beilot flaenorol, ac yn ddiweddarach cafodd hyn ei gymhwyso i dde Ynys Môn, y Carneddau, Ardudwy a de Meirionnydd mewn prosiectau blaenorol. Roedd yr arolwg eleni yn canolbwyntio'n llwyr ar nodweddu ffermydd ar ogledd Môn ac yng ngorllewin Meirionnydd. Roedd y rhan fwyaf o'r ffermydd yn yr ardaloedd hyn yn cydymffurfio â naill ai cynlluniau cwrt rhydd, cynlluniau cwrt rheolaidd neu gynlluniau gwasgaredig ynghyd â chyfran sylweddol o ffermydd cynllun llinol a ffermydd adeiladu sengl.*

## **NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

*This project forms part of a pan-Wales initiative designed to create a set of GIS polygons of surviving traditional farm buildings in order to produce data for current and future agri-environmental schemes. A second element of the project was to produce a record of the character of the farmsteads containing the traditional buildings following the approach laid out in a guidance document produced by English Heritage. An overall methodology had been devised by Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in a previous pilot study, and this was later applied to southern Anglesey, the Carneddau, Ardudwy and south Meirionnydd in previous projects. This year's survey focused solely on the characterisation of farmsteads on north Anglesey and in west Meirionnydd. The majority of the farmsteads in these areas conformed to either loose courtyard plans, regular courtyard plans or dispersed plans along with a significant proportion of linear plan farmsteads and single building outfarms.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The project was designed with the principal aim of producing polygons of traditional farm buildings that would inform future land management schemes. A program of polygonisation of features in farmland and woodland had previously been carried out by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts.

A large proportion of farms retain traditional farm buildings; a category defined as buildings predating the end of the First World War. The current project aims to record buildings falling into this category thus providing a register of traditional farm buildings.

Traditional farm buildings are an acknowledged deficit within the Historic Environment record and are generally considered to be at risk as farming practices evolve and diversify. The creation of this comprehensive dataset will influence Heritage Management work, Historic Environment Record enquiries and Development Control decision making.

A pilot project was carried out by Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in 2015/16 which examined an area in Radnorshire (CPAT Report No 1359). This allowed an efficient methodology to be formulated. The project was continued in Wrexham (CPAT Report No 1501) in 2016/17, North Ardudwy (GAT report No 1422) in 2017/18, South Anglesey (GAT report No 1478) in 2018/19, the Carneddau (GAT report 1502) in 2019/2020, Ardudwy (GAT report No 1585) in 2020/21, and South Meirionnydd (GAT report 1621 ) in 2021/22.

A second element was added to the project in the form of a study of the character of farmsteads following the Welsh Farmstead Mapping Programme, a manual that sets out the guidelines for recording the character of farmsteads. This methodology was developed and adapted from the National Farmsteads Character Statement by English Heritage (now Historic England). The character statement aims to “provide a consistent understanding of farmstead character at a landscape level, through recording the distribution, plan-type and degree of change seen between historic mapping and the present” (Lake 2014 and Lake and Edwards 2017).

This year’s survey has focused exclusively on the characterisation and production of a record of farmsteads following the methodology set out by the Historic Farmsteads manual (Lake and Edwards, 2017).



## **2 COPYRIGHT**

The copyright of this report is held by Cadw and Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Ltd. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v1.0.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

Pilot projects were carried out by Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in 2015/16 and 2016/17. The rest of the Welsh Archaeological Trusts (WATs), including GAT, started work on the project in 2017/18 in the form of limited pilot projects designed to develop and implement a consistent methodology for the identification and recording of historic farm buildings and farmsteads across Wales. A meeting was held in the CPAT offices before the project commenced. Abi McCulloch and Chris Martin described the methodology that they had developed for the polygonisation of buildings and Jeremy Lake, who had previously worked on the English Heritage farmstead characterisation project, presented a manual for recording historic farmstead character (Welsh Farmstead Mapping Programme, Lake and Edwards 2017). It was recognised that the characterisation element was potentially the most time-consuming element of the project so this was streamlined and 14 different fields were identified as the core features that should be recorded. Jeremy Lake subsequently visited all of the WAT offices in order to provide guidance for the characterisation project.

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust agreed to carry out a pilot project covering an area of Northern Ardudwy in 2018. The methodology established by CPAT and Jeremy Lake was used and CPAT provided a template MapInfo Table for the characterisation process. It was, however, necessary to add an additional 18 fields of metadata to conform to Gwynedd Historic Environment's spatial data standards. All digitisation was carried out using MapInfo desktop geographic information system (GIS) and one table was produced for supply to the HER, G2496\_HF\_Llyn\_2023, containing the farmstead characterisation data.

The methodology established in the pilot project has been adopted by GAT for subsequent phases of the project. Different parts of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust area have been covered in each phase: North Ardudwy (GAT report No 1422) in 2017/18; South Anglesey (GAT report No 1478) in 2018/19; the Carneddau (GAT report 1502) in 2019/2020; Ardudwy (GAT report No 1585) in 2020/21; South Meirionnydd (GAT report 1621) in 2021/22; and North Anglesey and West Meirionnydd (GAT Report 1657) in 2022/23. In 2022/23, in order to speed up the process, a decision was made to focus exclusively on the characterisation of farmsteads containing historic farm buildings, and not the individual farm buildings themselves. The 2023-24 phase of the project continues this methodology and focuses on the GIS mapping and characterisation of historic farmsteads on the Llŷn Peninsula, Gwynedd.

### 3.2 Farmstead Characterisation

The data was derived from Epoch GIS registered versions of the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition (1900-1901) 25" to the mile maps for Caernarvonshire. The 2nd edition maps were used because they are the closest to the end of the First World War cut-off point for the designation of traditional farm buildings by Glastir. These were examined in MapInfo GIS along with modern Ordnance Survey mapping and recent Next Perspectives Aerial photographic coverage to establish the extent of their survival.

The farmstead characterisation data was added to a MapInfo table. The extent of each farmstead (sub-classified as either a ‘farmstead’, ‘smallholding’ or ‘outfarm’ according to the guidance in the Welsh Farmstead Mapping Programme (Lake and Edwards, 2017)) was defined by a single polygon drawn around the buildings and yards. Each farmstead was assigned a new Gwynedd HER PRN if required and data fields relating to layout and condition as defined in Table 1 below were manually completed. Additional metadata fields were added to the table to conform to Gwynedd Historic Environment Records spatial data standards. The rest of the standard HER data fields were then filled in for each entry. NGRs and X-Y coordinates were extracted automatically from MapInfo. Other politico-geographic data was derived from existing MapInfo tables along with spatial correspondences to Cadw’s listed buildings database.

<b>PRN</b>	Unique No.	Unique reference number to fit with any existing data sets
<b>Site Name</b>	Modern Name (historic name)	Modern farm name with historic name (if different) recorded in brackets
<b>Classification</b>	FARMSTEAD	Defined as a site with farmhouse and associated working buildings and areas for the working of a farm
<b>Primary Attribute</b>	OUTFARM	Defined as a site (outfarm) or individual building range (field barn) remote from the farmstead
<b>PLAN TYPE</b>	This results from combination of Primary and Secondary Plan Attributes e.g. LC3 = Loose Courtyard with buildings to 3 sides of yard; RCmy = Regular Courtyard multi-yard plan	



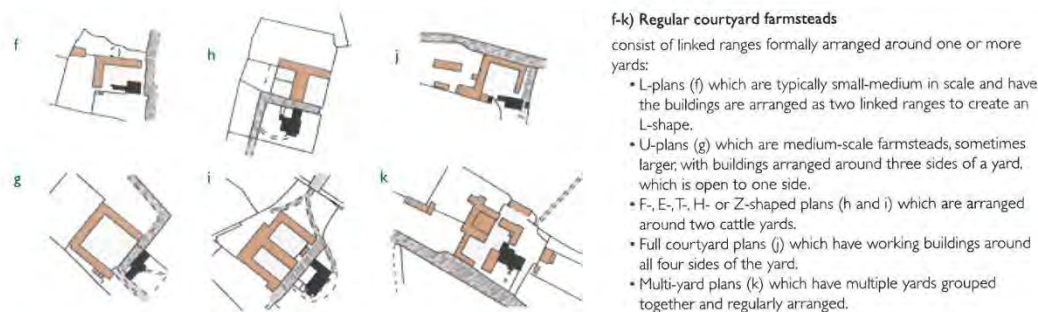
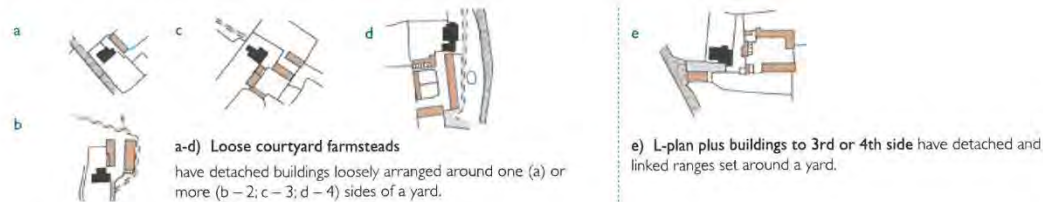
<b>Plan Type Primary Attribute</b>	DISP	Dispersed
	LC	Loose Courtyard
	LIN	Linear
	LP	L-plan (attached house)
	PAR	Parallel
	RC	Regular Courtyard
	ROW	Row Plan
	SING	Single building (use for field barns etc. where there is no yard)
	UNC	Uncertain
<b>Plan Type Secondary Attribute</b>	1, 2, 3, 4	No. of sides to loose courtyard formed by <i>working</i> agricultural buildings
	L3 or L4	Yard with an L-plan range plus detached buildings to the third and/or fourth side of the yard (may be used with LC or RC dependent on overall character)
		Regular Courtyard L-plan
	L	Regular Courtyard U-plan
	u	Regular Courtyard E-plan
	e	Full Regular Courtyard plan
	ful	Cluster (Used with DISP)
	cl	Driftway (Used with DISP)
	dw	Multi-yard (Used with DISP or RC)
	my	Covered yard forms an element of farmstead
	cov	Additional detached elements to main plan
	d	Presence of small second yard with one main yard evident
	y	
<b>Tertiary Attribute</b>	Codes as per Secondary Attribute table e.g. LC1d = Loose Courtyard with building to one side of yard with additional detached buildings; DISPmyL = Dispersed multi-yard group including a prominent Regular L-plan within it	

<b>Survival</b>	EXT	Extant – no apparent alteration
	ALT	Partial Loss – less than 50% change
	ALTS	Significant Loss – more than 50% alteration
	DEM	Site remains but no OS 2nd edition buildings legible
	HOUS	Farmhouse only survives
	LOST	No evident trace of farmstead/outfarm site
<b>Sheds</b>	SITE	Large modern sheds on site of historic farmstead – may have destroyed historic buildings or may obscure them
	SIDE	Large modern sheds to side of historic farmstead – suggests farmstead probably still in agricultural use
<b>Farmhouse Position</b>	ATT	Attached to agricultural range
	DET	Detached
	UNC	Uncertain (cannot identify which is farmhouse)
<b>Confidence</b>	H	High
	M	Medium
	L	Low
<b>Area</b>	Rapid polygonal capture of the area of the farmstead, capable of analysis after an area mapping project has completed	
<b>Notes</b>	Free text field to add notes relating to the character or identification of a record or confidence score	

Table 1: Farmstead characterisation GIS table attribute fields

The majority of the fields describe variations in the layout of the farm. The characterisation of the farmsteads utilises the classifications for farmstead types set out in the National Farmsteads Character Statement (Lake 2014, 10; see over).

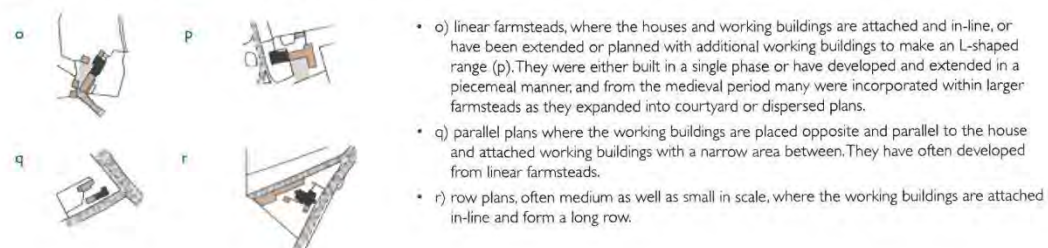
**Courtyard plans** are the most common forms of farmstead layout, where the working buildings are arranged around one or more yards. The largest courtyard farms are found on high-status sites, estate farms and in the arable vales, wolds and downlands of England, and the smallest in stock-rearing and dairying areas. Cattle yards either developed as areas for treading straw from the threshing barn into manure, or – especially in upland areas – an area for moving cattle and storing the manure. They may have scatters of other farm buildings relating to routes and tracks, usually cart sheds and other ancillary buildings.



**Dispersed plans** have no focal yard area and the working buildings are dispersed along a routeway or within the boundary of the farmstead. They are concentrated in upland and wood pasture landscapes including areas close to common land for holding stock. They vary greatly in scale and are often bisected by routeways and public footpaths.



**Linear and other farmstead types** are most closely associated with upland and common-edge farmsteads.



Typical farmstead plans (after Lake 2014, 10)

Once completed, the farmstead characterisation GIS table was submitted to the Historic Environment Record at Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.



### **3.3 Fieldwork**

In previous phases of the project a small amount of targeted fieldwork was included in the work programme. This was designed to assess the accuracy of the desktop survey by visiting selected farms and to record any regional architectural characteristics. A small number of farmsteads were visited after the completion of the desk-based work. A total of 6 farmsteads were visited, with all appearing to be the same plan as seen during the desk-based assessment (Plates 1-12).

## 4 RESULTS

This year's survey covered 1,196 square kilometres and added 2,025 farmstead polygons and 848 outfarms. This included full characterisation of the farmsteads within all 25" map squares that fall within north Anglesey and west Meirionnydd boundary areas (Figure 01 and Figure 02).

### 4.1 North Anglesey

#### 4.1.1 Study area

Anglesey is an island off the north-west coast of Wales and is characterised by its lowland pastures and mixed field patterns, with highlands restricted to small hills to the north and culminating in Holyhead Mountain. There are a number of fens and extensive areas of drumlins encountered to the north and west of the island (NRW 2014). The survey area is characterised by its urban districts of Holyhead and Amlwch. There is one Historic Landscape Characterisation on north Anglesey, Amlwch (GW1) which includes the harbour, settlement and rural areas, the Octel works, Llam Carw and the mines.

The coastal areas around north Anglesey vary greatly but are generally defined by coastal cliffs, outcrops, rocky headlands, sandy bays, dunes, lagoons and the dominance of heather and heath in elevated areas such as Holyhead Mountain, Mynydd Bodafon and the coastline near Amlwch. The settlement pattern in the coastal areas of Anglesey developed in the 19th century and later and is mostly influenced by the former mining industry by Amlwch or related to strategic transport routes.

Central Anglesey forms the agricultural core of the island and is characterised by its "open, rolling and windswept character" (NRW 2014, 2), survival of its medieval landscape of remote churches and place-names, and the prevalence of the 19th century landscape moulded by the construction of Thomas Telford's London to Holyhead post road, Chester to Holyhead railway and estate-sponsored courtyard farm settlements (Ibid).

The settlement pattern is characterised by the formation of landed estates and amalgamation of smaller farms and smallholdings, and later in the 19th century with the construction of the post road and the development of roadside villages such as Gwalchmai and Bryngwran. Outside of nucleated settlements, the island typically consists of scattered villages and hamlets, remote small farms and cottages, and the survival of gentry' farms and important estate centres (NRW 2014).

The post medieval period saw to the drastic change in agricultural practices on Anglesey and to the transformation of the rural landscape that we see today. During this period, shared open-field systems held by hamlets were gradually broken down and formed into compact farm units and landed estates. By the 17th century, these open-field systems were enclosed and bordered by

clawdds and hedgerows, and arable farming went into decline with the emergence of livestock rearing and dairy farming. The increasing importance of fatstock production during the 19th century as a result of the railway network that connected the island to the mainland, led to the increase in size of farms mainly through the merging of smallholdings (Jones 2021; Steele and William 2006).

This year's survey covered a total area of 548 sq km of north Anglesey, with 1,304 farmsteads and 269 outfarms and single buildings digitised. This included a full characterisation of the farmsteads within all 25" map squares that fall within or partly within the north Anglesey boundary area (Figure 01). The area covered by this year's survey on north Anglesey extends as far as Benllech to the on the east coast, north to Amlwch, across to Holyhead in the north-west and south to Rhosneigr.

#### **4.1.2 Attribute analysis and distribution**

The most frequent plan type was the loose courtyard plan that made up 28% of farmsteads i.e. with detached buildings arranged around one or more sides of a yard (Figure 03). Of these, 5% had working buildings on one side, 14% had buildings on two sides, 8% on three sides, and 1% on four sides. The majority of farmsteads (70%) had detached elements, and 5.1% of farmsteads had an additional yard.

Regular courtyard plans accounted for 25% of the farmsteads within the study area (Figure 04). 4% of these were U-shaped, 15% were L-shaped, 8% were L-shaped with additional elements to the 3rd side of the yard, 4% were multi-yard farms, 1% were full courtyards, <1% were E-shaped, <1% were T-shaped. The majority of these farmsteads (83.9%) had detached elements to the main yard. A common trend (10.8%) was the addition of a RCL yard as a tertiary attribute.

Linear farmyard plans made up 19% of farmsteads (Figure 05). Of these the majority (83.5%) had additional detached elements to the farmstead. A common trend was the addition of LC1 or LC2 yard which made up 3.9% of the tertiary attribute.

Dispersed farmyard plans accounted for 15% of the farmsteads i.e. farms with no focal yard (Figure 06). Of these, 6% were dispersed clusters with the buildings spread around the boundary of the farm, 4% were dispersed driftways dominated by the routeways to them and 5% had multiple working yards.

L-plans constituted 12% (Figure 07). A great proportion of these (74.5%) had additional detached elements, and/or less common the presence of a LC or RCL yard noted as a tertiary attribute.

Other farmstead layouts were recorded although all were uncommon. These were parallel plans (0.3%, Figure 08), row plans (0.3%, Figure 09), and covered plans (0.08%, Figure 10).



A total of 269 (17.1%) were outfarms i.e. a building or a range of buildings remote from the main farmstead. These mostly (95.2%) comprised a single building with a yard. Outfarms with two or more working buildings set around a yard made up 4.8% and were limited to either RCL or LC plan.

The overall distribution pattern of farmsteads on north Anglesey can be summarised as follows.

There is a relatively even distribution of farmsteads across the island, with little to no presence of farmsteads in the marginal areas of the now-called RAF Valley situated on west coast and the Cors Erddreiniog on the east coast, the woodland area in Presaddfed, and the industrial area of Amlwch and Mynydd Parys.

## 4.2 West Meirionnydd

### 4.2.1 Study area

West Meirionnydd is a mountainous region of northwest Wales that mostly lies within Snowdonia National Park and is characterised by the urban districts of Blaenau Ffestiniog and Bala. There are five Historic Landscape Characterisation areas within the study area, Aberglaslyn (Gw 7), Blaenau Ffestiniog (Gw 3), Trawsfynydd Basin and Cwm Prysor (Gw 11) and Bala and Bala Lakesides (Gw 16). The survey area is characterised by its highland agricultural practice of rough grazing, with settlements and enclosed fields confined to the valleys nestled between steep mountain ridges and hilltops. Rough grazing takes place on the higher slopes/upland areas where there is little evidence for long-term occupation.

In the late 18th century with the advent of the turnpike road (now modern A470), farms were built in this period and their field systems encroached on the fringes of marginal land in Trawsfynydd. The development of the slate mining and mineral extraction industry in the 19th century and the construction of railway links, including the Bala to Blaenau Ffestiniog link, led to an increase in the creation of farms, including on marginal land along Glastyn Estuary which was made possible by the creation of the Cobb. Mining activity included the slate mining landscape of Blaenau Ffestiniog, copper mining activity in Drws-y-Coed near Nantlle and exploitation of lead and minerals on the intermediate slopes of the Moelwyn range (NRW 2014).

Much occupation of west Meirionnydd is mostly confined to the valleys and small towns such as Bala and slate town of Blaenau Ffestiniog and compact valley villages such as Beddgelert and Trawsfynydd. The areas in and around Vale of Ffestiniog, Trawsfynydd, Llyn Tegid and Bala are mainly characterised by a settlement pattern dating to 18th and 19th century which consisted of a majority of scattered individually owned farms and their enclosed field systems, a small number of landowners, and few cottages outside of nucleated settlements (Ibid).

During the 16th century the development of estates saw to areas of upland pasture that had once been common grazings for medieval townships and monastic granges, being effectively owned by prosperous families. In the Vale of Ffestiniog the majority of the fields were owned by small estates that created them in the post medieval period, such as the Oakeley family and local squireens like Tan y Manod and Dduallt, as well as the Maddocks and Williams-Ellis family. The only established noble family to own much land in the area were the Wynnes of Bodfean and of Glynllifon. It were these estates that played a major part in shaping the landscape of the area, ultimately leading to the creation of the modern landscape today (GAT HLC). This is reflected in the consistent design and

appearance of some farm buildings around Cwm Teigwl, an area that was partly owned by Tan y Manod estate in the 19th century (Ibid).

This year's survey comprised a total area of 648 sq km of west Meirionnydd, in which 721 farmsteads and 579 outfarms and single buildings were digitised (Figure 02). This included a full characterisation of the farmsteads within all 25" map squares that fall within or partly within the west Meirionnydd boundary area. The survey of west Meirionnydd was extensive, reaching from Beddgelert to the slopes of Moelwyn range situated at the heart of Eryri (Snowdonia), east towards the quarries and town of Blaenau Ffestiniog, south to the farming areas around Trawsfynydd, and to the east to the areas surrounding Llyn Tegid and Bala.

#### **4.2.2 Attribute analysis and distribution**

The majority of farmsteads were loose courtyard plans which made up 42%, with detached buildings arranged around one or more sides of a yard (Figure 11). Of these, 15% had working buildings on one side, 24% had buildings on two sides, 4% on three sides, and 1% on four sides. Majority of farmsteads included detached elements (73.9%), and 5.4% had an additional RCL or LC yard.

Dispersed farmyard plans accounted for 23% of the farmsteads i.e. farms with no focal yard (Figure 12). Of these, 6% were dispersed clusters with the buildings spread around the farmstead boundary, 4% were dispersed driftways dominated by the routeways to them and 5% had multiple working yards. An interesting trend was the presence of RCL yard as a tertiary attribute which made up 10.3%.

Linear farmyard plans made up 14.3% of farmsteads (Figure 13). Of these the majority (83.5%) had additional detached elements to the farmstead. A common trend was the addition of LC1 or LC2 yard as a tertiary attribute which made up 9.7%.

Regular courtyard plans accounted for 12.7% of the farmsteads within the study area (Figure 14). 8.7% were L-shaped with additional elements to the 3rd side of the yard, 5% were L-shaped, 2% of these were U-shaped, 2% were multi-yard farms, <1% were E-shaped, <1% were T-shaped and <1% were full courtyards. Smaller LC2 yard made up 8.7%.

L-plans constituted 7% (Figure 15). A great proportion of these (92.6%) had additional detached elements, and less common was the presence of a LC or RCL yard considered as a tertiary attribute.

Parallel plans made up 0.14% of farmsteads (Figure 16), this plan type was the rarest with only a single farm attributed to this category.

A total of 579 (44.5%) were out farms i.e. a building or a range of buildings remote from the main farmstead. These mostly (95.3%) comprised a single building with/out a yard. Of these 2.9% were LC2 yard type.

In the north-west part of the survey area, the main concentrations of farmsteads are found on the flat, reclaimed land along the Glaslyn Estuary, dispersed on the valley bottom, on some of the hill slopes and on the edges of Llan Ffestiniog, as well as along the west intermediate hillslopes of the Moelwyn Range and south at Penrhyn-Garth where the farms are found on small hollows and on top of ridges.

Towards the centre of the survey area around Trawsfynydd, the farmsteads are widely dispersed on largely marginal land and at Cwm Prysor where they are mostly restricted to the lower slopes of the valley bottom. In the uplands of Migneint, few farmsteads and out farms can be found with the majority of them now lost.

The surrounding areas of Bala and Llyn Tegid are characterised by a wide distribution of farmsteads, across a variety of farming landscapes including the hills north and west of Llyn Tegid, as well as the steep wooded hill slopes above Rhiwlas.

There are extensive areas of remote uplands devoid of farmsteads and out farms, these include the upper slopes of Moelwyn, the uplands around Cnicht, the woodland covered Dwyrdd southern slopes and the upper slopes at Cwm Prysor.



### **4.3 Survival and condition**

Survival and condition of farmsteads and outfarms were determined from mapping and aerial photographic evidence.

In general, the survival of farmsteads shown on the 25" map was relatively high with 23.6% of farmsteads intact with no significant loss of structures, 36.5% with less than 50% alteration and 11.4% that had more than 50% alteration. Lost farmsteads account for 20.2% as seen on aerial photographs as fully or partially ruined. Only 8% of farmsteads were demolished, often replaced by either a new farm or residential property.

On north Anglesey a large proportion of farmsteads have a high survival rate with 61% either fully intact or have less than 50% alteration. 11.9% of farmsteads had more than 50% alteration, 8.8% have been lost and 7.9% demolished. Majority of outfarms and single buildings on north Anglesey have been either demolished (40.1% ) or lost (33.1%).

In west Meirionnydd 58.9% of farmsteads are either fully intact or have less than 50% alteration, and 10.4% had greater than 50% alteration. 11% of farmsteads have been lost and 6.5% demolished. A significant amount (50.8%) of out farms and single buildings has been lost and are from aerial photographic evidence in different states of ruin, with 13.1% having been demolished.

18.8% of farmsteads have been converted to some degree on north Anglesey, i.e. a working building that is now house or holiday let. Of this amount, 3% accounts for farmsteads converted into residential properties with little to no original surviving structures, and less than 1% turned into caravan park sites.

In west Meirionnydd 8.5% of farmsteads have been converted; with only 3.5% turned to residential properties and less than 1% contain adjoining caravan park sites.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 The digitisation process**

This year's survey followed the methodology established in 2017-2018 to ensure an efficient workflow and make sure that outcomes were compatible with the Gwynedd HER. This year's survey

As has been previously said, farmstead characterisation is more complex and time consuming than the digitisation of individual buildings, this is due to the manual process. The input table contains 35 fields but 12 of these fields require manual input and the process requires reference to aerial photography, existing records from Gwynedd HER, Cadw listed buildings and RCAHMW. The categorisation process requires confirmation of the current status and condition of the buildings, the identification of the farmhouse, and the allocation of the plan to one of 8 basic plan types and 18 sub-plan types.

The main categories of farmstead plans as defined in the Historic Farmsteads manual (Lake and Edwards, 2017) proved to be readily identifiable although smaller more irregular farmsteads could sometimes be interpreted in more than one way. It was in many cases possible to reliably identify secondary and tertiary attributes such as multi-yards, drift-ways, clusters and numbers of buildings around courtyards. Some of the other attributes appear to require more subjective judgement and could be regarded as being on a continuum of loose courtyard plans.

## 5.2 Conclusions

North Anglesey farmsteads are typically regular either LC or RCL plan, with a high proportion of associated out farms consisting of one building with an accompanying yard, and less common two or more buildings set around a yard. These out farms tend to be located adjacent to the farmstead or on a main routeway. This lowland pattern differs to Meirionnydd, where farmsteads tend to have a dispersed appearance, with many outfarms located remotely from the farmstead.

Numerous farmsteads on north Anglesey are dated to the late 18th and early 19th century, many of which are still in use. A little less than half of the out farms recorded have either been left to ruin or demolished and replaced by large modern sheds. A significant proportion (18.8%) of farmsteads has been converted to holiday cottages and caravan parks, of which are mainly found by the coastline.

Much of the settlement pattern on north Anglesey is characterised by high status farms that were built to a regular courtyard plan, with smaller farms either affluent in their own right or part of a manor estate. It appears that many smaller farms developed as a result of the changes and developments in agricultural practices.

In west Meirionnydd farmsteads are typically small and irregular, either LC or Dispersed plan with a high proportion of associated out farms consisting of a single barn or cowhouse with accompanying yard, a pattern similarly noted in south Meirionnydd (Ryan Young 2021). The presence of cow houses and barns either in fields or by the roadside and usually at some distance from the main farmsteads is characteristic of the Meirionnydd area. This pattern in the upland areas is not seen in other parts of Gwynedd such as on Anglesey.

Most farmsteads appear to be late 18th or early 19th century in date, of which many are still in use. In the Glaslyn estuary area, the older farmsteads have been replaced by 20th century buildings leaving only rundown 19th century barns, whilst in the more remote upland locations farms and barns have been left to ruin. Southwest of Blaenau Ffestiniog, some farmsteads have been flooded as a result of the construction of the Llyn Celyn reservoir in the 1960s. There is also a trend for converting farmsteads into holiday lets and caravan park sites, with most situated near villages and towns such as Beddgelert and Bala. However, a higher proportion of farmsteads have been either demolished or converted into residential properties.

Much of the settlement in west Meirionnydd is on the intermediate to lower slopes and valleys in Ffestiniog, Trawsfynydd and Bala, and on marginal lands in Trawsfynydd and on the reclaimed lands of Glastyn Estuary. Here the settlement pattern is characterised by LC yard and Dispersed yard plan farms set along routeways into the uplands, with probable origins to transhumance farming of the

medieval hafod and hendre system. The practice of transhumance went into decline between 16th and 19th century, with many of the hafoddy on upland margins developing into permanent separate farmsteads, some of which are still occupied (GAT HLC).

## 6 REFERENCES

- Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, 1998, Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales
- Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, undated, *Historic Landscape Characterisation - Ffestiniog Historical Themes* <http://www.heneb.co.uk/hlc/ffestiniogthemes.html>
- Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, undated, *Historic Landscape Characterisation - Trawsfynydd Historical Themes* <http://www.heneb.co.uk/hlc/trawsfynyddthemes.html>
- Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, undated, *Historic Landscape Characterisation - Bala Historical Themes* <http://www.heneb.co.uk/hlc/balathemes.html>
- Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, undated, *Historic Landscape Characterisation - Amlwch Historical Themes* <http://www.heneb.co.uk/hlc/amlwchthemes.html>
- Hopewell, D., 2018, *Recording Traditional Farm Buildings and Historic Farmsteads; Pilot Project: North Ardudwy 2017-18*, GAT Report 1422
- Jones, B., 2019, *Recording Traditional Farm Buildings and Historic Farmsteads: South Anglesey 2018-19*, GAT Report 1478
- Jones, B., 2020, *Recording Traditional Farm Buildings and Historic Farmsteads: Carneddau 2019-20*, GAT Report 1502
- Jones, B., 2021, *Recording Traditional Farm Buildings and Historic Farmsteads: Carneddau 2020-21*, GAT Report 1585
- Lake J. and Edwards B. 2017, *Historic Farmsteads: A Manual for Recording, adapted as working document for the Welsh Farmstead Mapping Programme*
- Lake J. 2014, *National Farmsteads Character Statement*, English Heritage
- McCullough, A. E. and Martin, C. H. R., 2015, *Polygonisation of Traditional Farm Buildings in Radnorshire, Glastir Pilot Project*, CPAT Report 1359
- McCullough, A. E., Watson, S. W. and Martin, C. H. R., 2017, *Polygonisation of Traditional Farm Buildings in Wrexham*, CPAT Report 1501
- Natural Resources Wales, 2014, NLCA02: Central Anglesey, In: *National Landscape Character*. URL: [NLCA02 Central Anglesey - description \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](http://cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/nlca02)
- Natural Resources Wales, 2014, NLCA02: Central Anglesey, In: *National Landscape Character*. URL: [NLCA01 Anglesey Coast \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](http://cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/nlca01)
- Natural Resources Wales, 2014, NLCA06: Snowdonia, In: *National Landscape Character*. URL: [NLCA06 Snowdonia - description \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](http://cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/nlca06)
- Ryan Young, C. 2022. *Recording Historic Farm Buildings and Farmsteads: South Meirionnydd 2021-2022*, GAT Report 1621



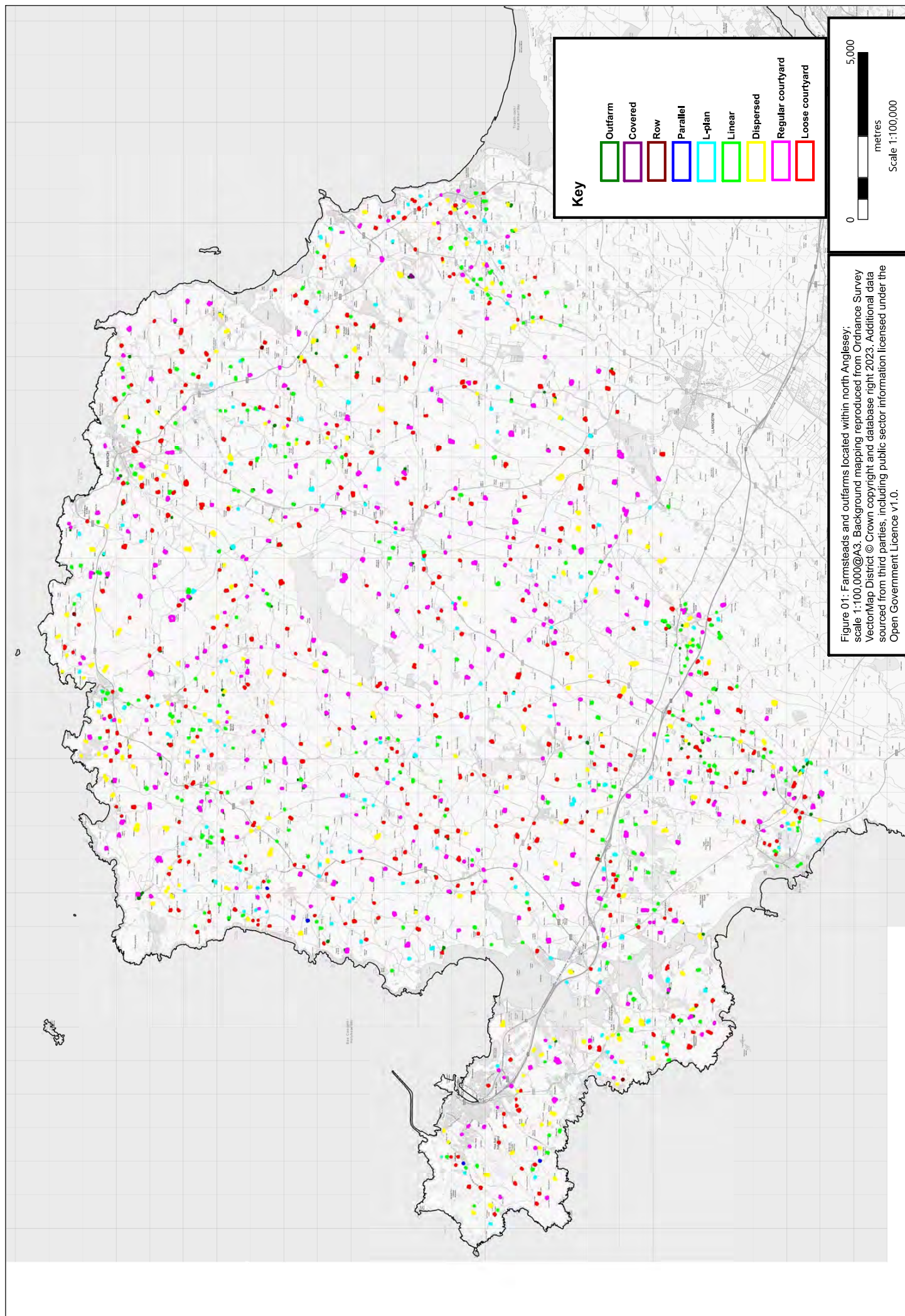
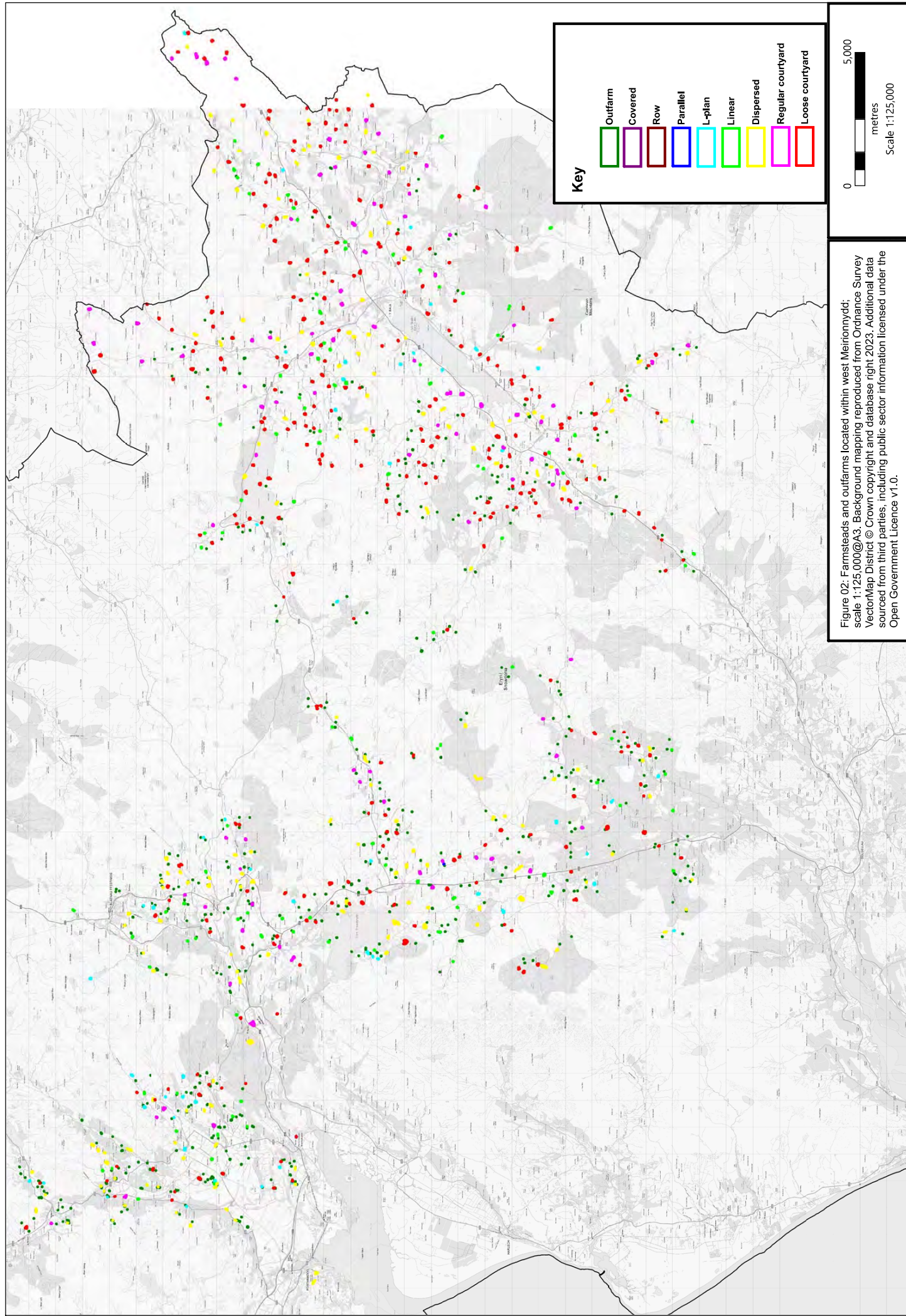
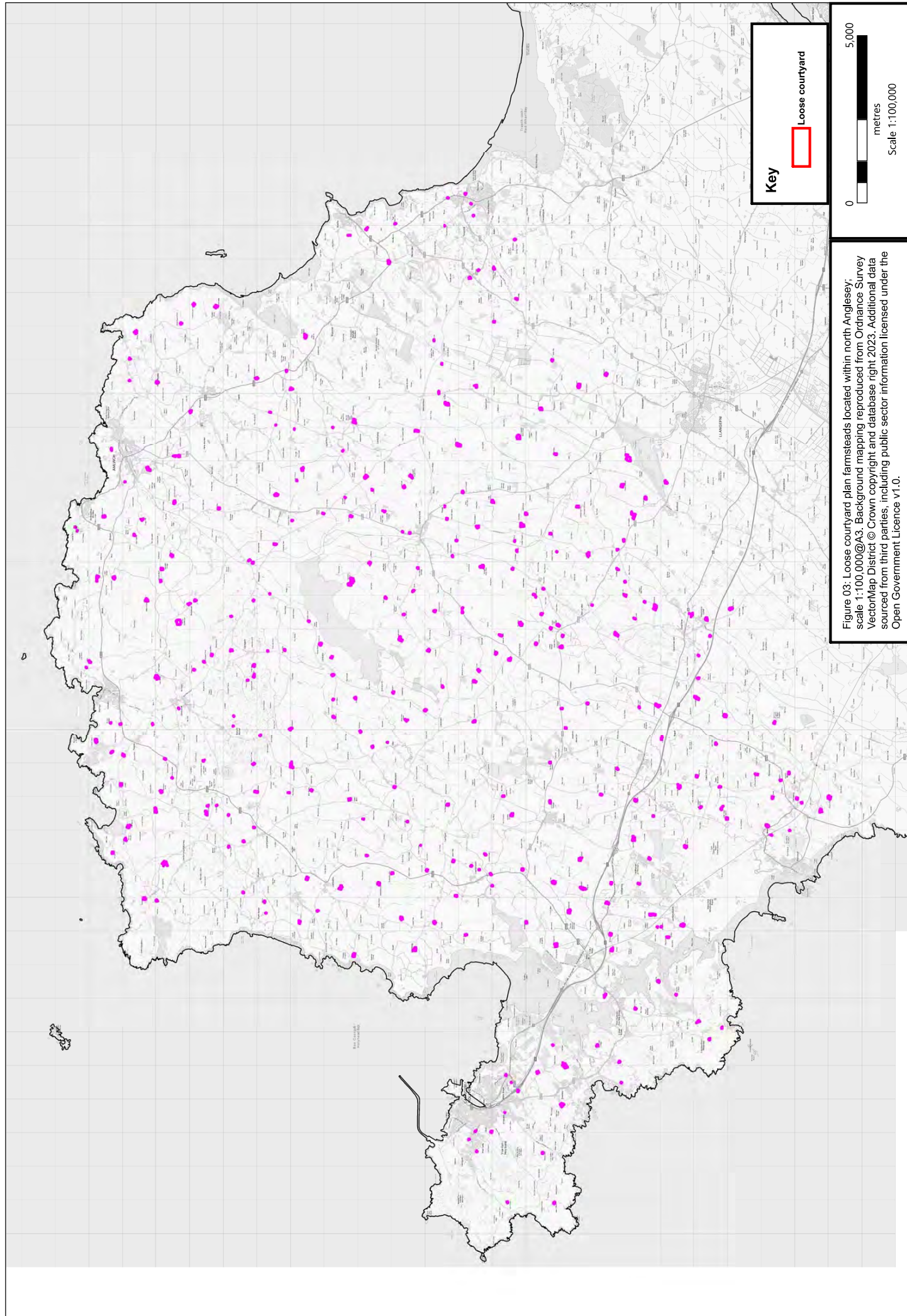


Figure 01: Farmsteads and outfarms located within north Anglesey; scale 1:100,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v1.0.









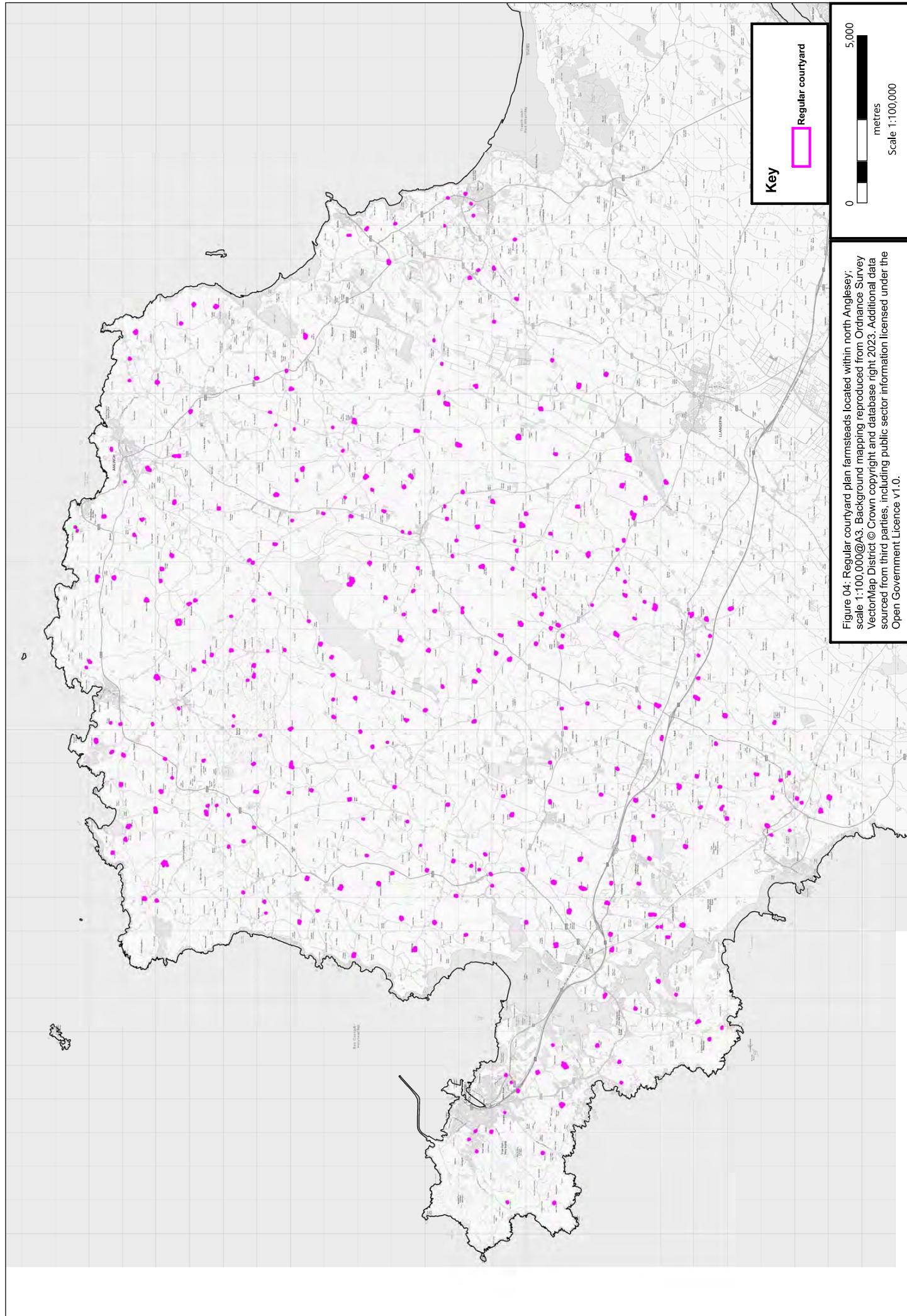
Key

Loose courtyard

0 5,000  
metres  
Scale 1:100,000

Figure 03: Loose courtyard plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey;  
scale 1:100,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey  
VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data  
sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the  
Open Government Licence v1.0.





Key

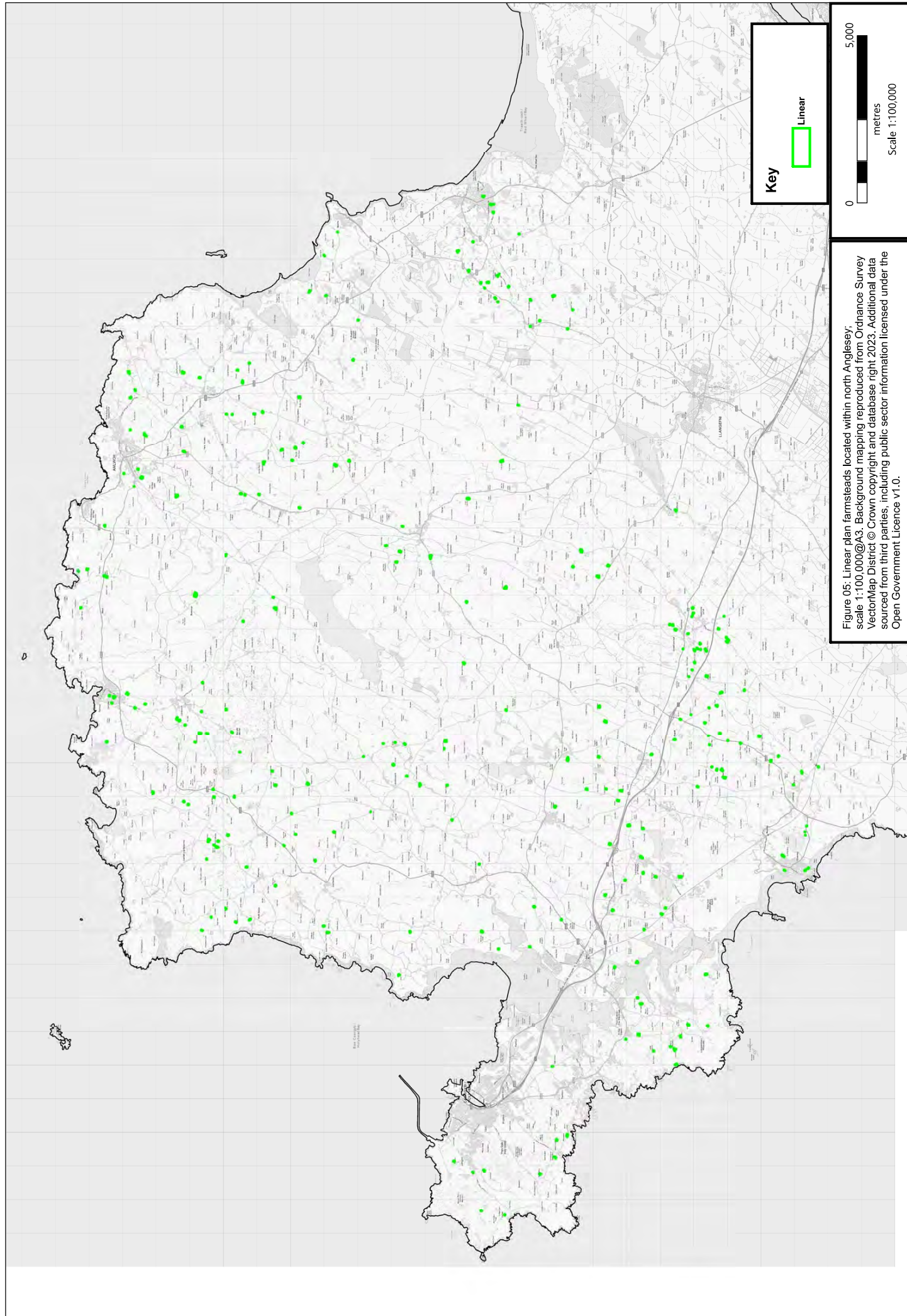
Regular courtyard

0 5,000 metres

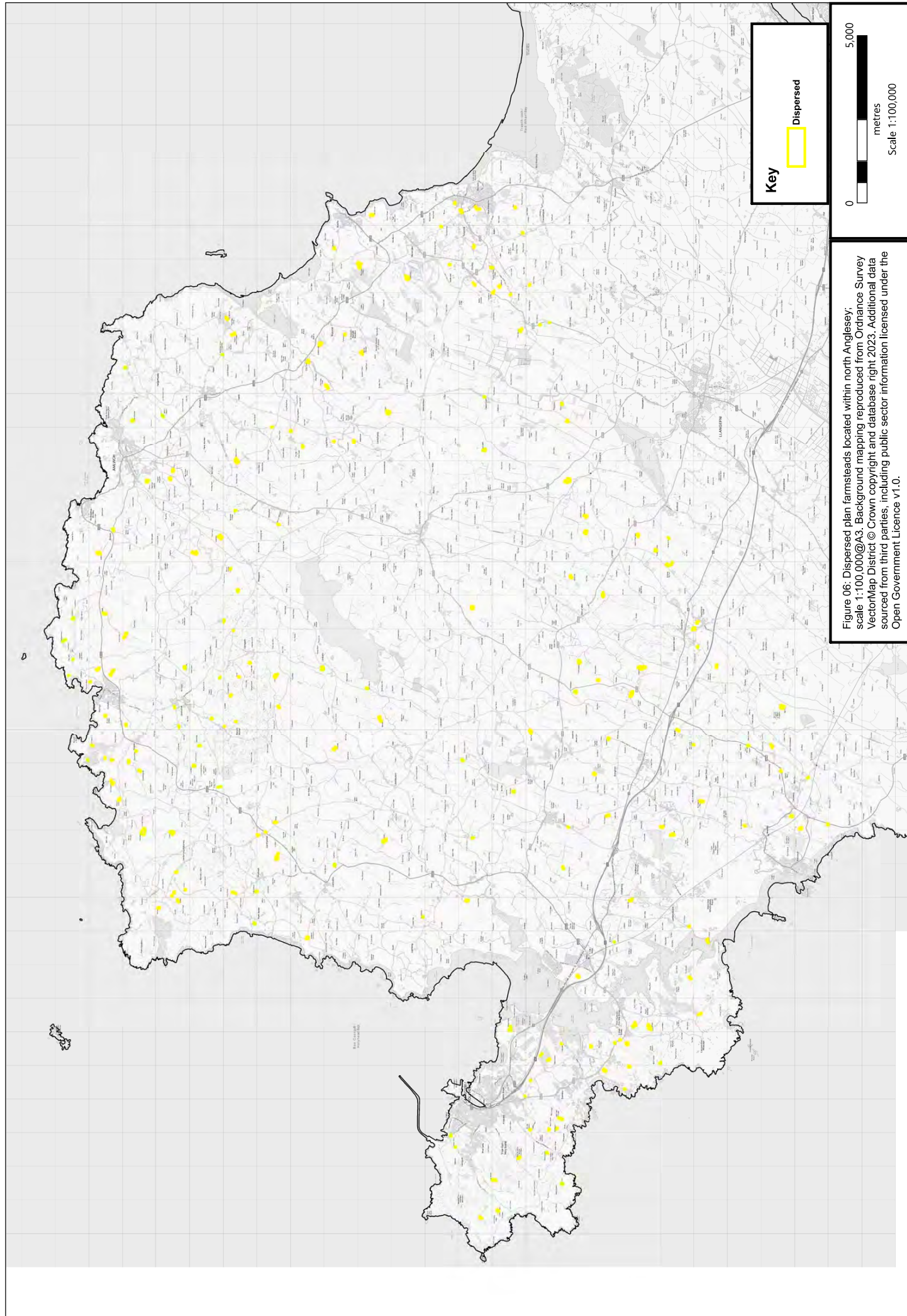
Scale 1:100,000

Figure 04: Regular courtyard plan farmsteads located within north Angelsey, scale 1:100,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v1.0.

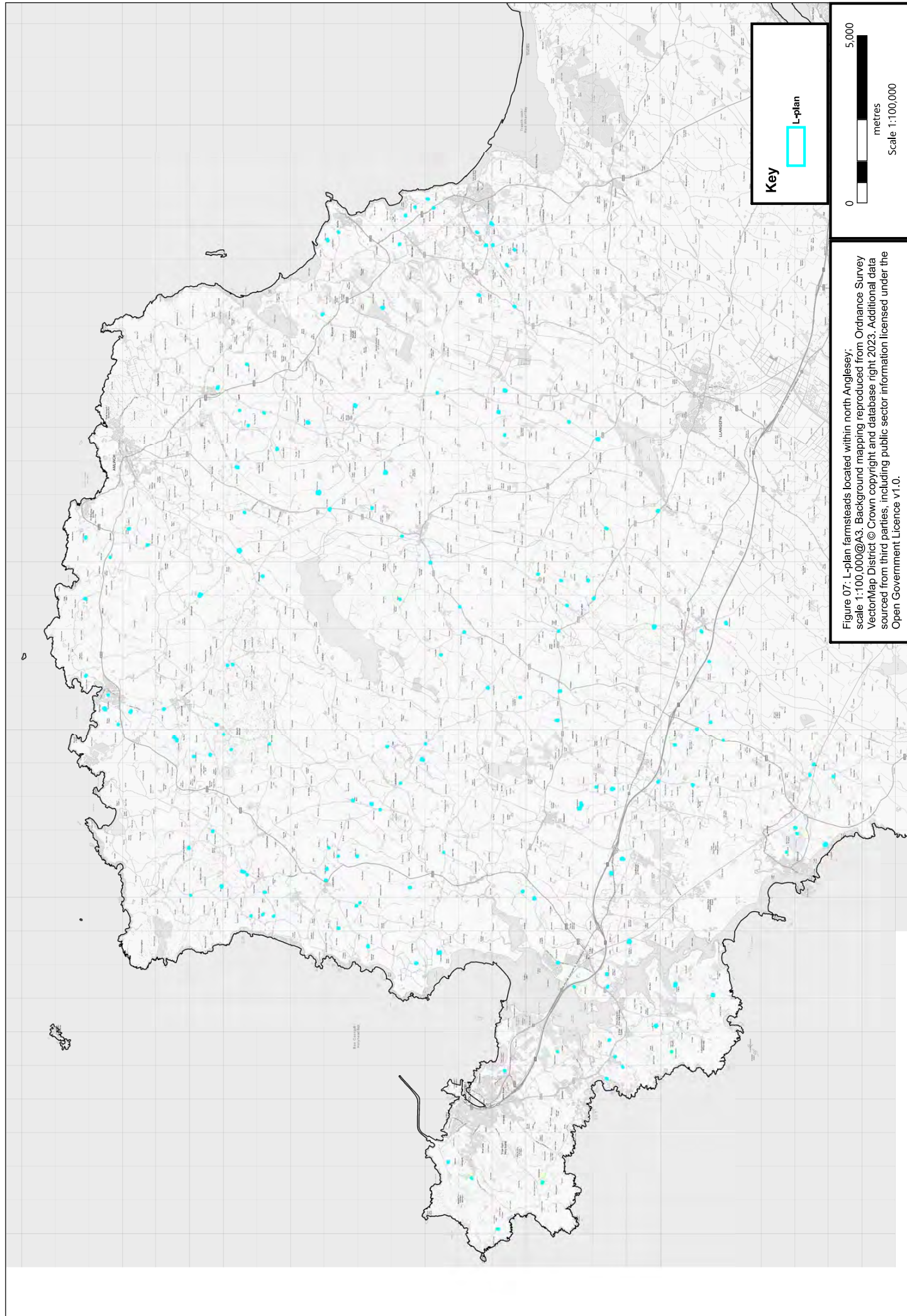










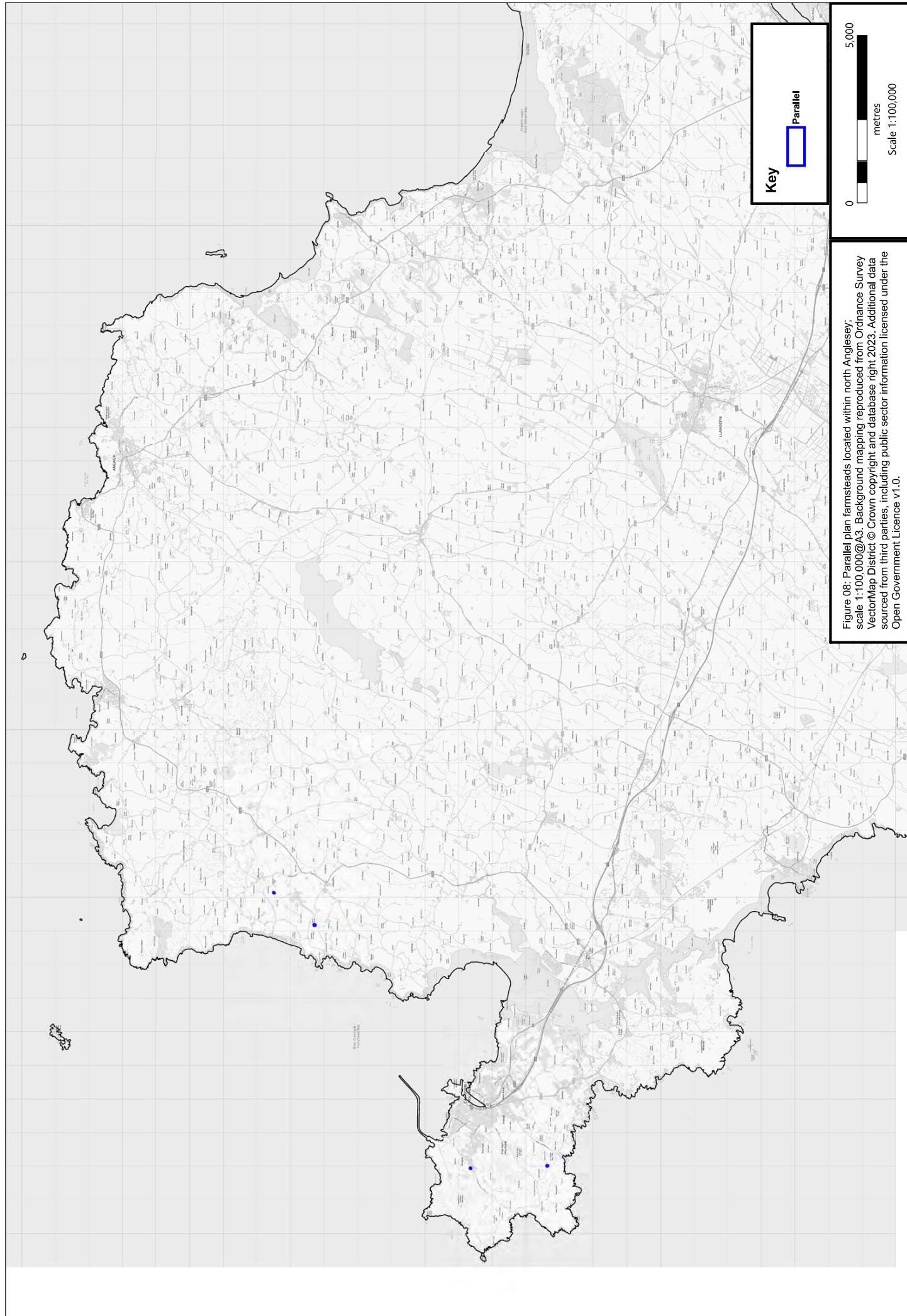


**Key**

L-plan

0 5,000  
metres  
Scale 1:100,000

Figure 07: L-plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey;  
scale 1:100,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey  
VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data  
sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the  
Open Government Licence v1.0.



Key

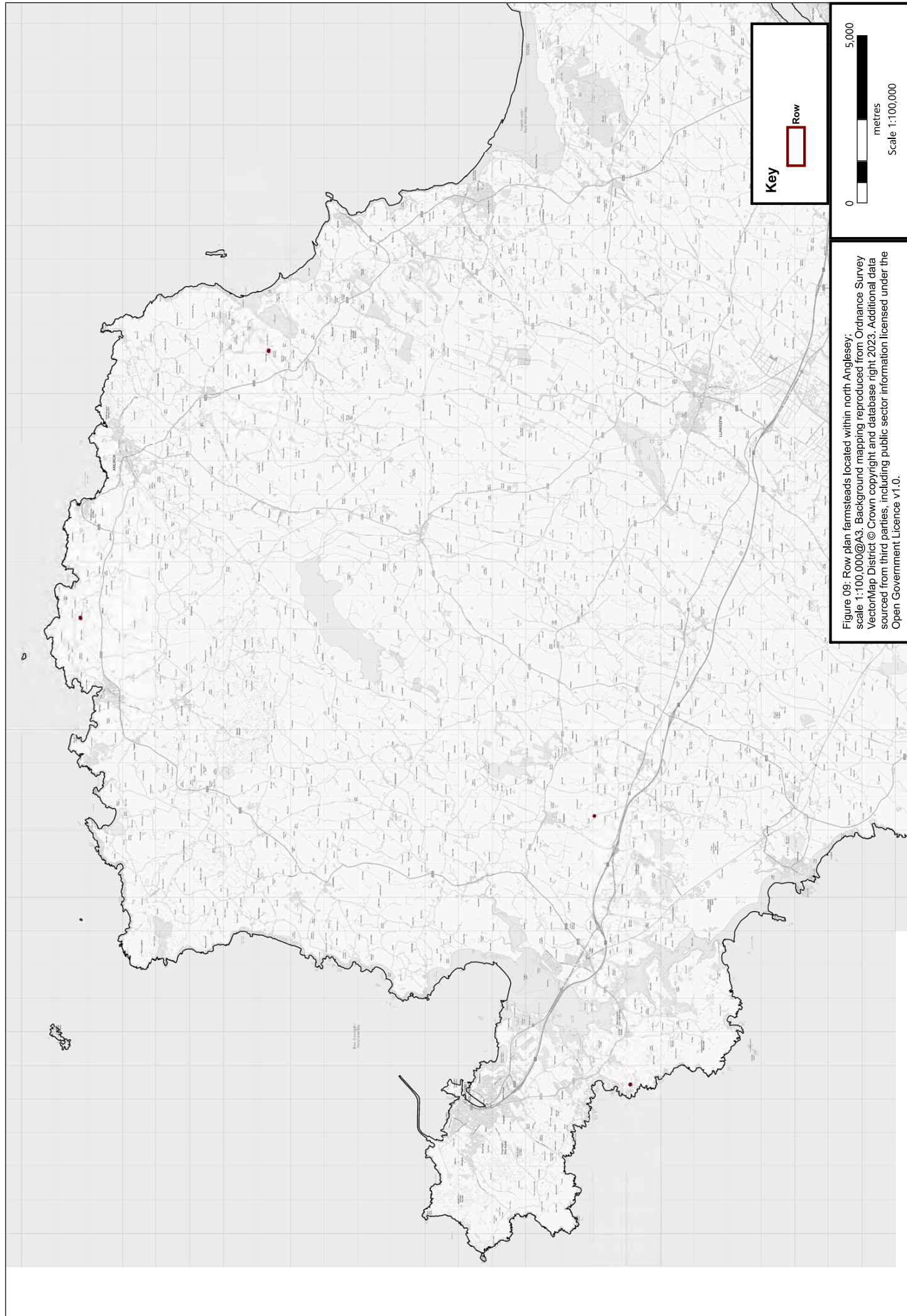
Parallel

0 5,000 metres

Scale 1:100,000

Figure 08: Parallel plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey; scale 1:100,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v1.0.





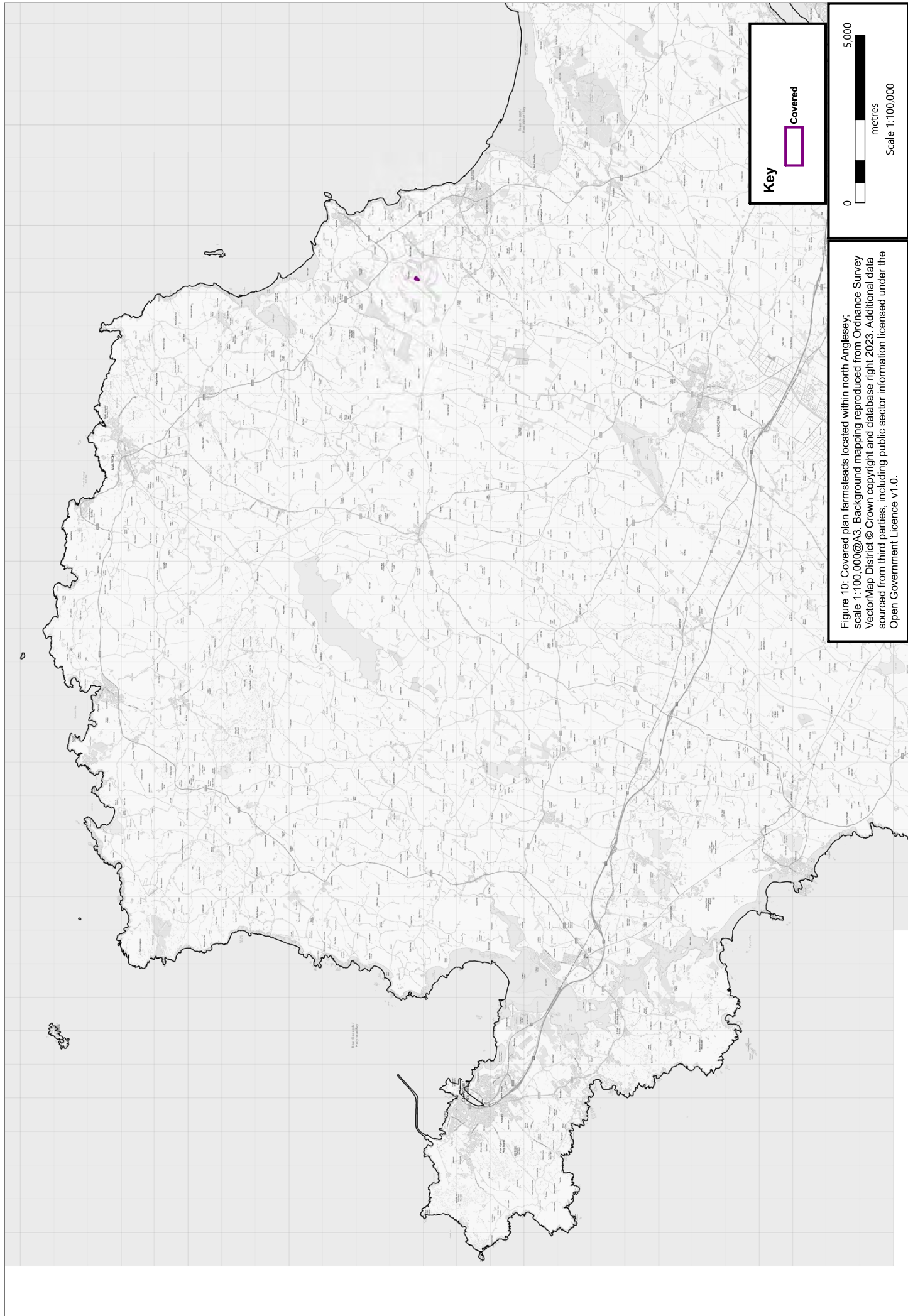
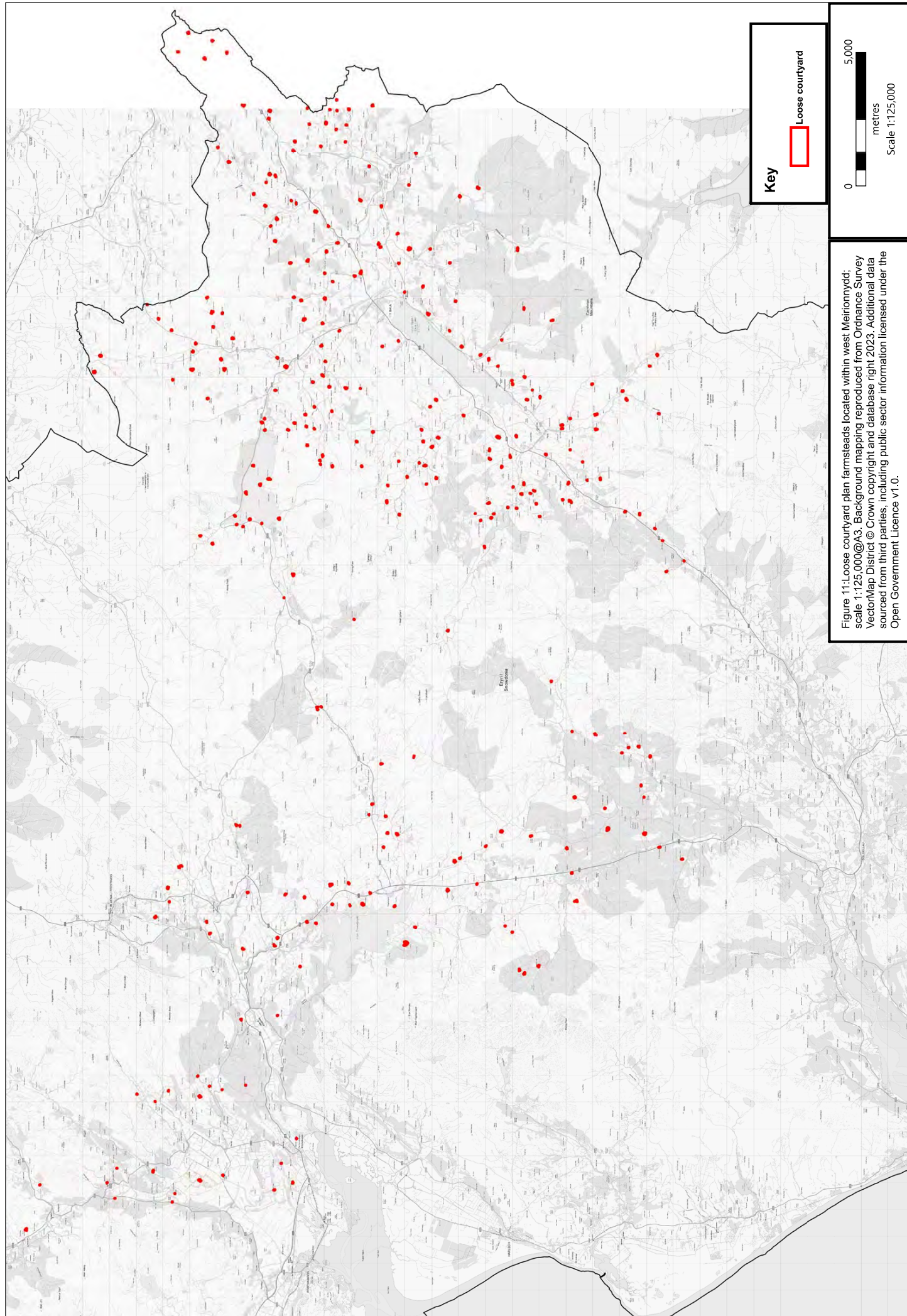


Figure 10: Covered plan farmsteads located within north Anglesey:  
scale 1:100,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey  
VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data  
sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the  
Open Government Licence v1.0.







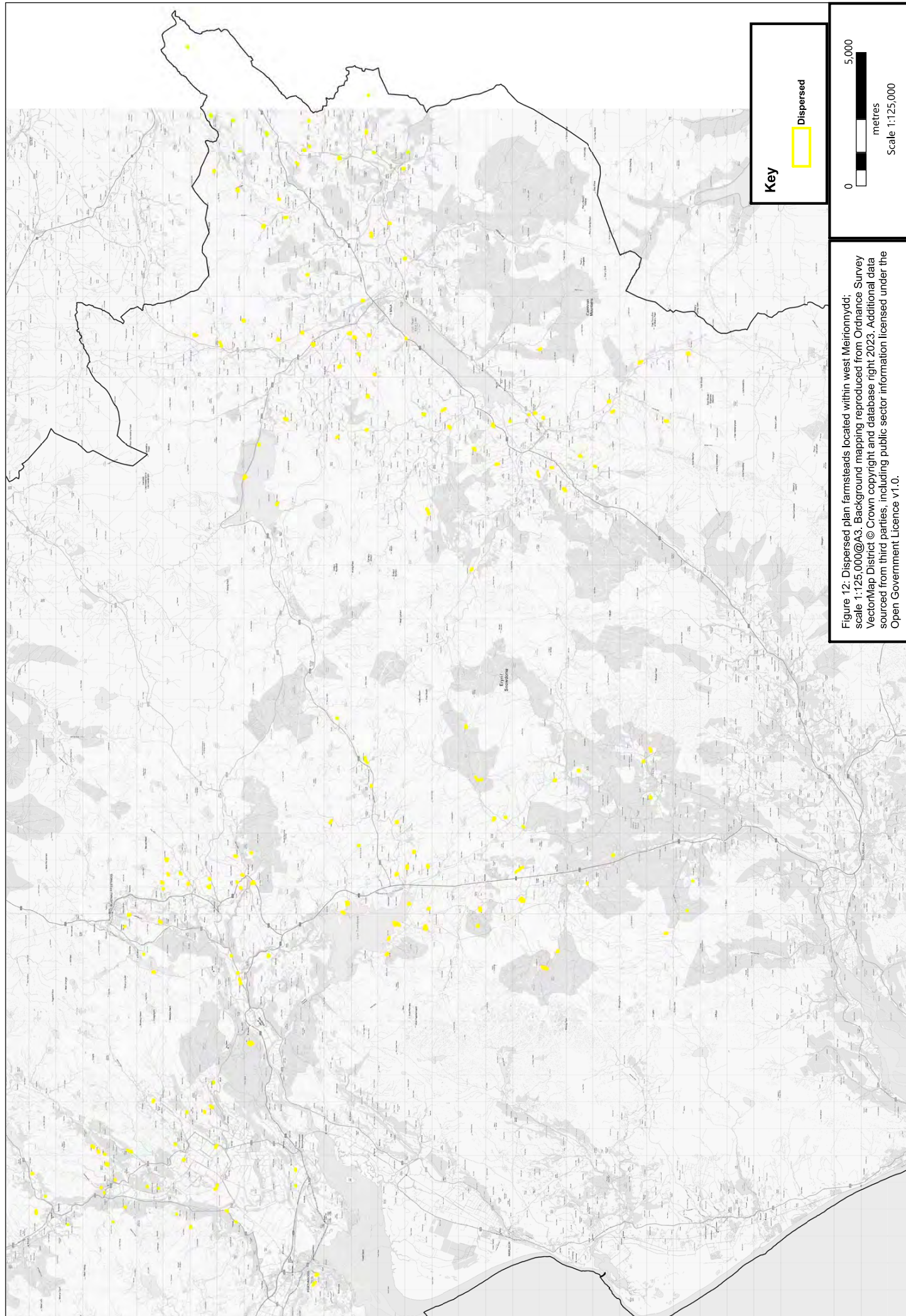


Figure 12: Dispersed plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd; scale 1:125,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v1.0.



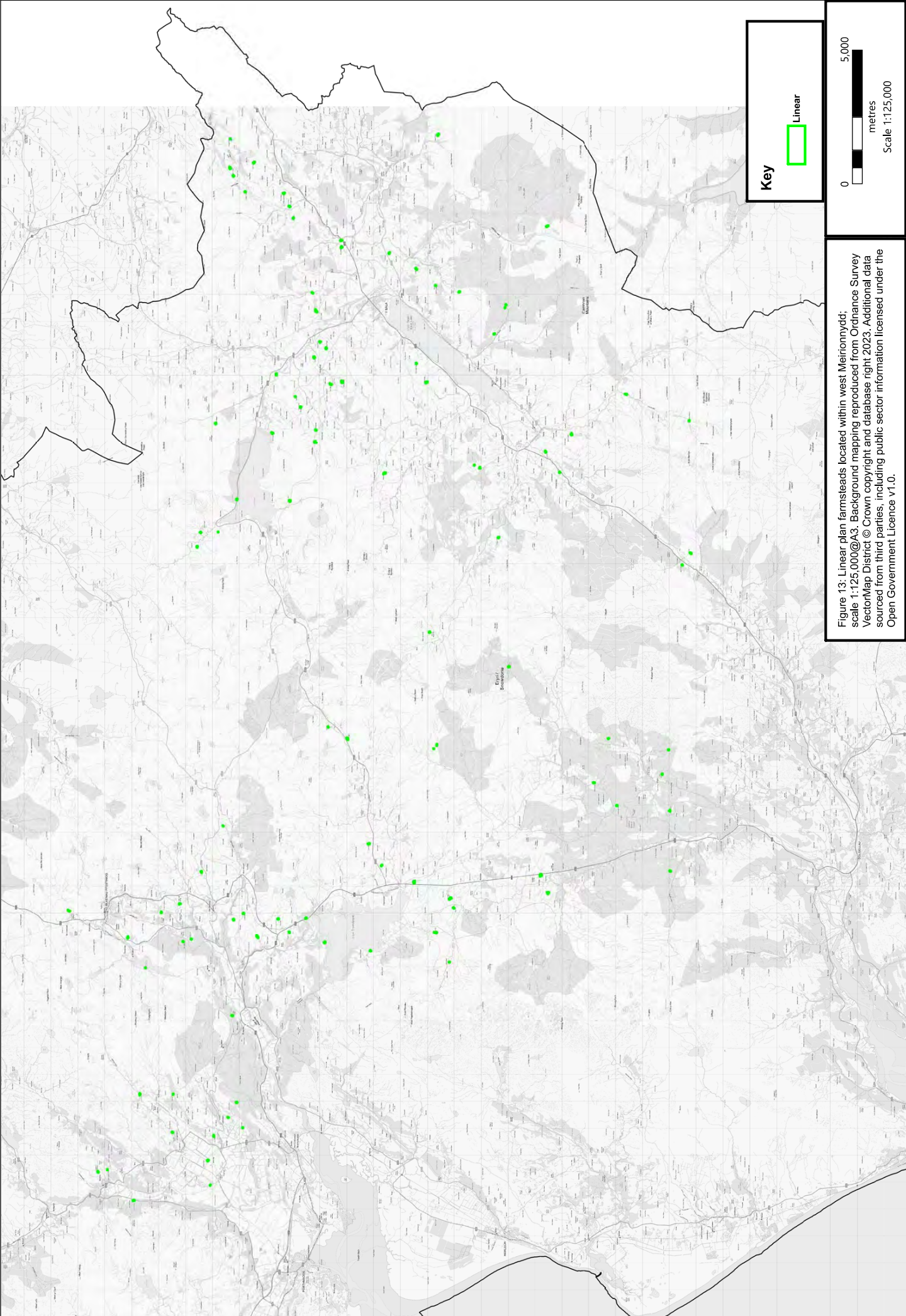
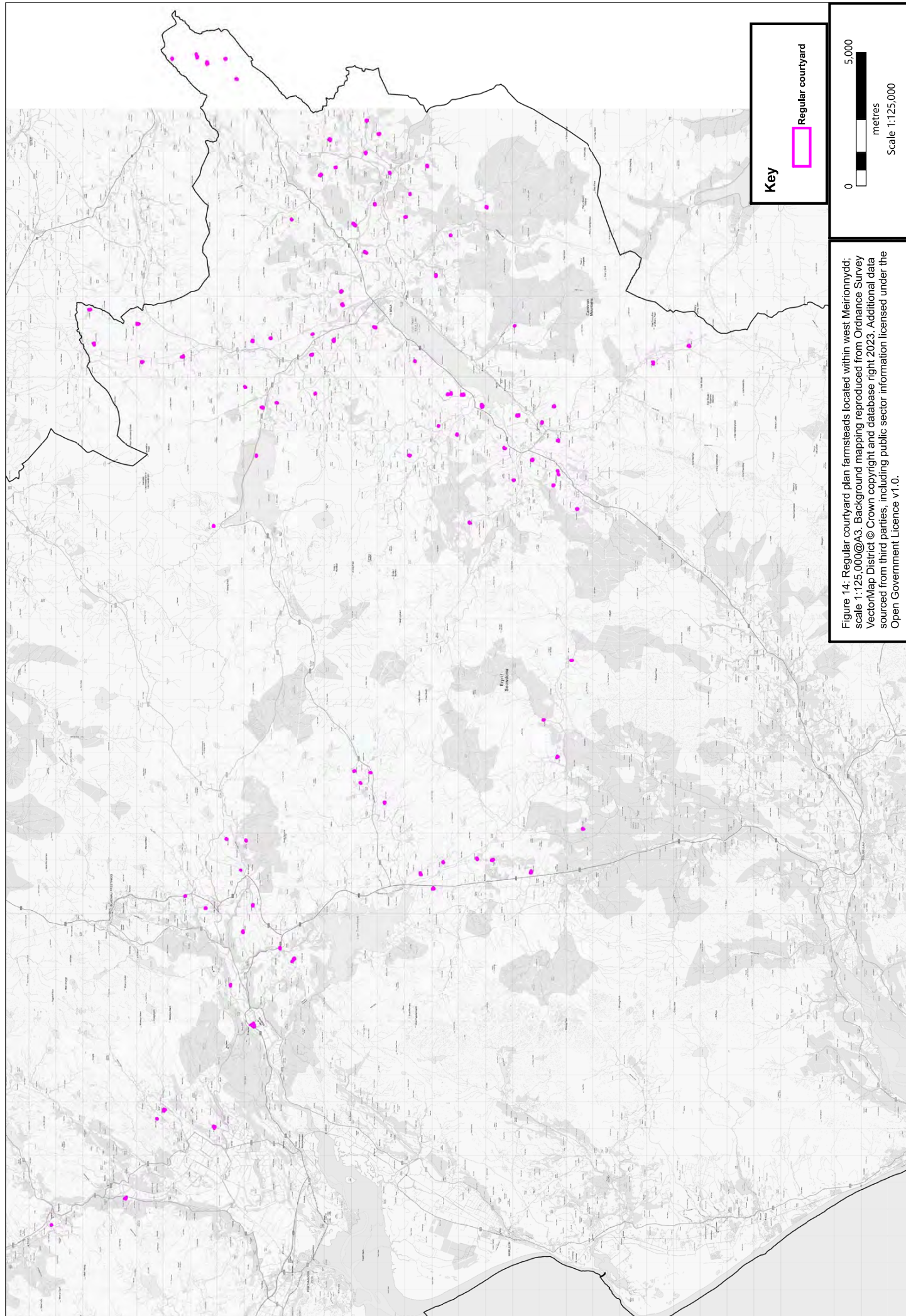


Figure 13: Linear plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd:  
scale 1:125,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey  
VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data  
sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the  
Open Government Licence v1.0.





Key

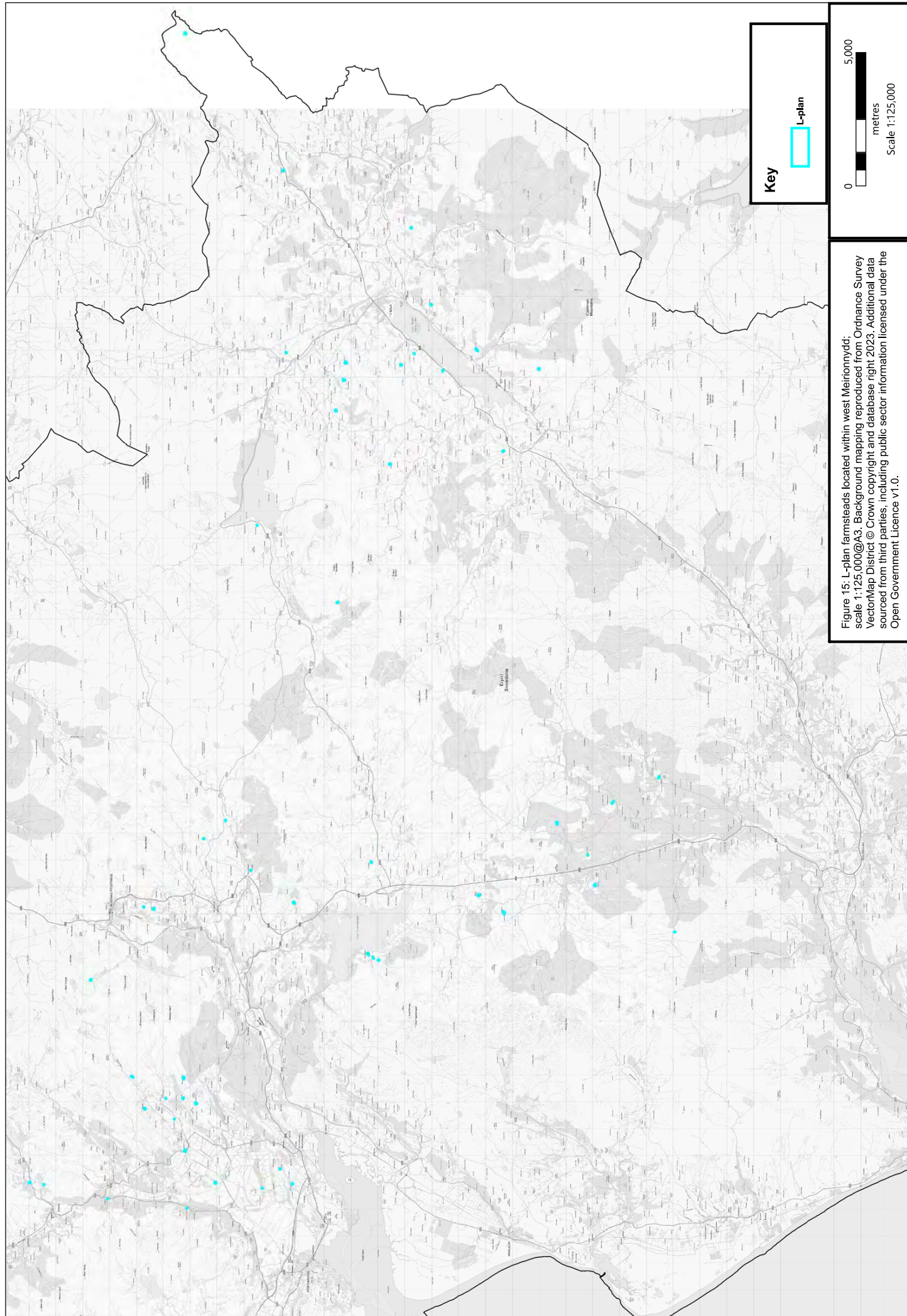
Regular courtyard



Scale 1:125 000

Figure 14: Regular courtyard plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd; scale 1:125,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v1.0.





**Key**

L-plan

0 5,000  
metres  
Scale 1:125 000

Figure 15: L-plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd:  
scale 1:125,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey  
VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data  
sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the  
Open Government Licence v1.0.





Figure 16: Parallel plan farmsteads located within west Meirionnydd;  
scale 1:125,000@A3. Background mapping reproduced from Ordnance Survey  
VectorMap District © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Additional data  
sourced from third parties, including public sector information licensed under the  
Open Government Licence v1.0.





Plate 01: General view of Mynachdy Farm regular courtyard plan; view from SW (archive reference: G2496\_01).



Plate 02: View of northern and western ranges of Mynachdy Farm courtyard; view from SE (archive reference: G2496\_04).





Plate 03: View of corn/grain loft located in the eastern range of Mynachdy Farm courtyard; view from W (archive reference: G2496\_05).



Plate 04: View of farm building used for drying pheasants at Mynachdy Farm; view from NNE (archive reference: G2496\_07).





Plate 05: View of animal housing in a separate field at Mynachdy Farm; view from N (archive reference: G2496\_10).



Plate 06: General view of Caerau Farm secondary regular courtyard; view from S (archive reference: G2496\_14).





Plate 07: View along northern range of Caerau Farm secondary regular courtyard; view from WSW  
(archive reference: G2496\_17).



Plate 08: General view of Perthi Farm dispersed plan showing cowhouse in background and garage in foreground; view from WNW  
(archive reference: G2496\_30).





Plate 09: View of surviving Perthi farm buildings; view from ESE (archive reference: G2496\_31).



Plate 10: General view of Wern-las-deg Farm loose courtyard plan; view from SSE (archive reference: G2496\_33).





Plate 11: General view of Cwmcloch-Isaf Farm regular courtyard plan; view from NE (archive reference: G2496\_41).



Plate 12: View of pigsty (left) with 'y gegin foch' in background, and stable and animal shelter at rear of barn (right) at Cwmcloch-Isaf Farm; view from W (archive reference: G2496\_43).



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



Gwynedd Archaeological Trust  
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd

Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth, Bangor, Gwynedd. LL57 2RT  
Ffon: 01248 352535. Ffacs: 01248 370925. email: [gat@heneb.co.uk](mailto:gat@heneb.co.uk)