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Welsh Government

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Consultation – summary of response

# Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan

July 2022

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

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## Overview

Summary of responses on the Welsh language Communities Housing Plan

## Action required

This document is for information only.

## Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan (2021)

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## Additional copies

This summary of response and copies of all the consultation documentation are published in electronic form only and can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website.

Link to the consultation documentation: [Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan | GOV.WALES](#)

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## Introduction

Arad Research has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to analyse responses received during the *Consultation on the Proposed Welsh Language Community Housing Plan*. This paper presents the findings of the analysis and identifies key messages and themes arising from the consultation responses.

## About the consultation

The consultation sought views on Welsh Government's proposals for the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan which offers a package of interventions to support Welsh-speaking communities with a high concentration of second homes.

The consultation was launched on 23 November 2021 and closed on 22 February 2022. The full text of the consultation is available at:

<https://gov.wales/welsh-language-communities-housing-plan>

Welsh Government received a total of 776 responses to this consultation. Five hundred were submitted via an online form and 276 via a form which was downloaded and returned as a document. Some of these responses did not directly follow the structure of the consultation questions; the qualitative responses that did not follow the structure of the questions were reviewed, and the sections accompanying the questions were analysed alongside other responses to that question.

Welsh Government also received template responses from four campaigns:<sup>1</sup>

- Some 440 responses were submitted using the *Hawl i Fyw Adra* response template.
- 24 responses were submitted using the *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* response template.
- Seven responses were submitted using the *Dyfodol yr Iaith* response template. Eight responses were submitted using the *Cylch yr Iaith* response template.

The main themes emerging from all responses were analysed together, including responses submitted on a campaign template. These themes were compared to the main themes emerging from responses other than those of the campaigns. This analysis found that there were no significant differences between the main themes arising in all responses and responses excluding campaign responses. As a result, the report focuses on the main themes that emerge from all responses.

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<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to provide a precise figure for the number of campaign responses. There were some variations in individual responses submitted on a campaign template, and some respondents followed the template for only certain questions or elaborated on the responses. All responses were recorded and analysed alongside other responses.

## Methodology

A thematic analysis of the qualitative data from the consultation responses was undertaken. The thematic analysis categorised the opinions, comments and issues raised by respondents into overarching themes. The analysis aimed to identify the themes into which the consultation responses most frequently fall. The process for undertaking this analysis was as follows:

1. A random sample of responses for each question was reviewed by two researchers (each reviewing a different half of the sample).
2. The responses in the sample were coded thematically by the two researchers, to identify the themes arising most frequently. The researchers compared the themes identified and agreed on a set of codes to be utilised for the remaining responses.
3. One of the researchers then reviewed all the remaining responses to each question to verify that the themes identified in Step 2 were still relevant.
4. This process ensured that all consultation responses were reviewed during the analysis.

### *Limitations of the methodology*

The responses received are indicative of the views of the respondents who elected to complete the consultation questionnaire. This means that the responses cannot be considered representative of the general population, or the stakeholders affected by this action plan.

The findings reflect the most frequent themes emerging from the comments made by respondents, including their comments on themes which they were not directly asked questions about. This means that some of the themes identified in the analysis go beyond the scope of the questions asked in the consultation.

### *Reporting findings*

This report presents key themes arising frequently within consultation responses. These themes are based on the evidence provided in the responses to the consultation. Throughout the report, the themes and points presented are drawn from comments made by consultation respondents and do not represent the views of the authors of the report.

Interspersed throughout the report is a selection of quotes to illustrate the points and themes raised.

## Question 1: Do you think a co-operative or community-led housing model could help local people to access affordable housing?

A clear majority of respondents, including those who responded using a campaign template and those who did not, felt that **a co-operative or community-led housing model could help local people to access affordable housing**. Among those who agreed, some noted that this was **subject to** specific factors, for example how the proposals are implemented, funding levels etc. (these themes are expanded upon below). A small minority expressed mixed views in response to the question and **a small minority felt that a co-operative or community-led housing model would not help local people to access affordable housing**. A small minority of respondents indicated they had no opinion on this question.

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

As noted above, many respondents noted that their support for the proposed co-operative housing model was conditional. Some of the most common conditions provided include:

- The housing model would need to focus on the needs of the community and the local community should have adequate and meaningful opportunities to shape or influence how the model is developed.
- There would need to be sufficient funding in place for the plan to have a positive impact.
- The housing model would need to be carefully managed and monitored to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved.
- Given that many existing co-operatives or community social enterprises are supported by dedicated volunteers, it would be necessary to ensure that the success of the proposed model is not reliant on volunteers.

Some respondents took the opportunity to note that although they agreed that a co-operative or community-led housing model could help local people access affordable housing, they were concerned that this scheme would still be insufficient:

*"I am concerned about the extent of co-operative housing and that they may not be sufficient to meet the county's needs and respond to the housing crisis"*

A handful of respondents suggested an alternative model to the one proposed which included examples such as: (i) building more social housing; (ii) a housing exchange program; (iii) direct financial assistance for local people to buy houses.

Of the minority of respondents who did not agree that the proposed housing model could help local people to access affordable housing, a small number raised concerns about the possibility of social discrimination. Some were concerned that local people would have to live in a separate restricted area and that the preferred option is to allow local Welsh speakers to compete in the free market.

## Question 2: How can Welsh Government encourage further participation in a co-operative or community-led housing model in Wales?

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

Respondents proposed a number of ideas about how Welsh Government could encourage more people to participate in a co-operative or community-led housing model in Wales. Some of the most popular suggestions are listed below, with the most popular suggestions listed first.

Many respondents were of the view that an effective way of encouraging further participation in the proposed models was to ensure **local governance structures play an active role** in developing and implementing the community-led housing model. Namely, it was stated that Welsh Government should seek the support and co-operation of communities and town and community councils. Some respondents stated that the support and genuine involvement of those with the best understanding of their community's needs was key to encouraging further participation in the proposed model.

Many expressed the view that **promoting** and marketing the benefits of the **housing model** is an important element of ensuring participation. Many referred to media likely to be used by those most affected by housing issues, including social media (for young people struggling to buy or rent their first home) and local newspapers.

Many suggested that **public meetings** are an effective and practical way of engaging with local people in developing and delivering the proposed schemes.

Respondents referred to the fact that **financial grants** and funding more generally would encourage participation in the proposed models. Many felt that capital investment from Welsh Government was needed to demonstrate commitment to the issue, and to realise a sustainable model which is financially viable. This could include grants or direct capital funding, and other financial incentives such as low interest loans, land acquisition, and council tax and land transaction tax reduction measures.

Some respondents felt that **research was needed** to develop the proposed plans more fully and to produce a more effective model. The purpose of the research would be to develop a better understanding of the current situation and to gather an evidence base of similar initiatives. Reference was made to research on: the level of public interest in the proposed model; the number of people the housing model would need to support or house; and areas where the situation is most serious. It was felt that more detailed information on such issues would lead to increased confidence among local people.

Some respondents offered suggestions relating to **policy or regulation** which would encourage people to participate in the proposed housing model. These suggestions included:

- Introducing exceptions to current rules on the use of land.
- Introducing legislative measures to limit the number of second homes within an area

- Giving local communities rights and priority over local assets
- Making planning permission easier to obtain.
- Abolition of the Land Transaction Tax (LTT) for co-operatives who buy property.

Some respondents said it would be necessary to **employ staff (e.g., a housing officer) to oversee** and organise the local housing model for the scheme to work and thus encouraging participation. The nature of the jobs suggested by respondents varied - some referred to the need for staff providing information and guidance, others suggested administrative support, and others co-operative project managers. Some respondents emphasised the need to employ staff rather than rely on volunteers to avoid individuals being put under pressure in terms of their volunteering capacity. These responses were sometimes accompanied by a suggestion of general support from Welsh Government, such as leadership and the provision of skills and knowledge to ensure the success of local housing models.

### **Question 3: What are the challenges to sustaining sufficient local interest and investment in social enterprises?**

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

Many respondents interpreted this question as asking about challenges when social enterprises buy properties to convert them into holiday lets rather than buying existing holiday homes. With that in mind, the challenge identified by respondents was that the scheme would **lead to an increase in the number of second homes in the area**. Many felt that in order to gain any benefits, many houses would need to come into community ownership. This in itself was considered to add to the problem of too many second homes within Welsh speaking communities and local people struggling to compete in the open housing market.

It was noted that **lack of funding** from Welsh Government to support the project is a potential challenge. It was felt that a significant financial commitment was needed to support community ownership of property and that those looking to sell get a fair price. Many described the need for financial support from Welsh Government in the context of rapidly rising property prices.

Some respondents expressed concern that apathy or **lack of interest from locals** poses a challenge to the likely success of the proposed model. Some were of the view that local people needed to be persuaded to participate as they lacked confidence in the success of the scheme, or they are simply not aware of how such a scheme would work. For this reason, some respondents suggested that examples of similar successful schemes would need to be promoted. Similarly, a handful of comments felt that lack of community cohesion and ambition would be a barrier to the success of the proposed model.

Two interrelated challenges raised by some respondents were **reliance on volunteers** and **skill shortages**. It was felt that skilled workers needed to implement the model and its

various aspects (e.g., planning, advertising, legal skills etc.). Some respondents said they felt the affected communities did not currently have the relevant skills to realise the proposed schemes. A few respondents felt that regulations would be a barrier. For example, some felt that help was needed to navigate regulatory applications, planning permission applications, paperwork etc.

A small number of respondents were of the view **that wider economic development is needed** in their area to provide a holistic solution to the housing problem and that this was the priority. These respondents mentioned factors such as the need for more support for local businesses, higher wages, the creation of new employment, and the strengthening of community infrastructure to support local people to live locally.

## **Question 4: What support or incentives could Welsh Government offer to encourage engagement in such a scheme?**

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

Among the various suggestions put forward by respondents about how Welsh Government can offer support to encourage people to take a leading role in setting up social enterprises or co-operatives, these were the most common responses:

- The most common suggestion was that Welsh Government could offer financial assistance to local social enterprises to purchase housing stock in areas where local people are priced out of the market. Beyond general financial assistance, some respondents suggested more specific financial measures such as affordable loans and council tax and Land Transaction Tax relief.
- Some respondents suggested that Welsh Government could provide specialist training and guidance for social enterprises set up by local people, to support and develop their skills in establishing and purchasing local housing stock. This includes training on financial management, legal issues, planning, construction, and business plans etc.
- Empower and encourage local stakeholders such as local authorities, town and community councils, and the *mentrau iaith* (Welsh language initiatives) to play a part in the development of social enterprises including the housing model. Some respondents emphasised that effective community structures are already in place and need to be supported.
- The benefits of the scheme to local people need to be promoted. This included ensuring that local people are not only aware of any local schemes but that they also understand how they can benefit them and their community. Some respondents commented that there is a need to share best practice, for example, to identify similar models where this has been successful in order to demonstrate to local people how such a model might work.
- Legislative measures, such as the relaxation of planning laws to make it easier to build new houses. Some respondents suggested that local people should be given legislative priority in order to have an opportunity to buy local property ahead of others.

## Question 5: To what extent do you think the Estate Agents' Steering Group is a practical and effective way of helping estate agents to play their part in protecting Welsh language communities?

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The responses received using a campaign template generally agreed with the establishment of a steering group and suggested that "the Steering Group can encourage estate agents to prioritise local people". There was **general support for the concept of a steering group** also among many respondents who were not involved in the campaign, who considered the group to be 'helpful' and a 'starting point', despite low expectations about how successful the group would be in terms of influencing estate agents.

Many respondents who had not used the campaign template (and also some template respondents who had expanded on their answer) were sceptical of how effective a steering group could be. Many said **that estate agents are profit driven** and that this would override any other type of encouragement or guidance. There were doubts as to how successful any role would be for estate agents. A small number of respondents were clear that there should be no role for estate agents.

Some respondents offered ideas or **actions for estate agents** such as offering a Welsh-only sales package, offering area information packs, regulating sales websites, and more local marketing. Other respondents suggested ideas or actions beyond the role of estate agents, repeating answers given to other questions.

## Question 6: How can estate agents be encouraged or incentivised to engage with the Steering Group?

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

A variety of ideas were proposed but overall respondents did not expand on their answers. Several respondents said that they were unsure or could not think of any actions.

Suggestions received included:

- An estate agents' **code of conduct** or licensing scheme.
- **A financial incentive, higher commission or payment** should be available for selling to local buyers - although respondents did not elaborate on how this would work.
- Giving estate agents more information about the threat to communities, and so appeal to their moral principles.
- Receiving recognition of their membership of the group.

- Outlining the benefits of joining the group, which could include enhancing their reputation, marketing, branding.

Several respondents repeated their response to the previous question and insisted that estate agents should not be part of any steering group. Others thought that estate agents, especially the nationals, would not be persuaded to join.

## Question 7: Would a short period for local residents to view and make offers on housing help them to access property markets?

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

A clear majority of respondents, including those who responded using a campaign template and those who did not, were of the view that **a short period for local residents to view and make offers on housing would help them** to access the market. A number of respondents went on to explain that this period needs to be **at least a few weeks**.

Despite the general agreement, there were concerns that a short period to view a property would make little difference as the main issue preventing local people from accessing the property market is a **lack of affordable housing** and high house prices. Respondents also commented that such a scheme would face obstacles as individual estate agents would attempt to get the best price and hold out for longer for a higher price.

*“It would [help], but the seller doesn't have to sell to a local person and may turn down an offer as he suspects a better offer will come their way once the property is more widely advertised.”*

## Question 8: What else might help offer local buyers a 'fair chance' in the housing market?

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template.

Two main themes emerged, which were also the main themes from the campaign responses. Respondents considered that **second homes should be subject to a higher level of council tax** with many respondents stating that a significant increase is needed in order for this to have an impact. The second main theme was that the **Homebuy - Wales equity loan scheme should be available to all local buyers** and more generally, adequate financial support for young Welsh-speaking families to be able to buy or rent an affordable property within their own community.

Other general comments made by respondents included the following:

- Comments relating to the need for action to improve jobs in communities that pay higher wages.
- Comments on changes to the planning system, including making it necessary to have planning permission to convert a house into a second home or short-term holiday let, and to obtain permission to convert a second home into a short-term holiday accommodation business. Some respondents suggested that town and country planning powers should be devolved to local planning authorities.
- Support and explore alternative methods of financing the purchase of a house and borrowing money.
- Interventions in the housing rental market to ensure private property rents are more affordable and suitable properties are available.
- Place a cap on the number of holiday homes or short-term holiday lets within communities.
- Support self-build schemes and efforts to renovate vacant houses and buildings.

## **Question 9: How could Cultural Ambassadors engage at a community level to support social inclusion and develop a better understanding of our culture, heritage and language?**

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template.

Three main responses were mentioned far more frequently than any others:

- Cultural ambassadors should receive specialist training on how to represent their area's cultural and social history in a way that is relevant to their local community. Many suggested that this training should be accredited.
- Making it possible to volunteer to become volunteer cultural ambassador. That is, ensuring that this role is not offered to specific people so that anyone can become an ambassador.
- Create an online 'live map' where the areas in which the cultural ambassadors operate can be found.

In addition to these common responses, respondents offered a range of other suggestions:

- Cultural ambassadors should be approachable and maintain a good relationship with their community. This could be through organising events engaging the whole community and instilling a sense of pride in local culture and history.
- Similarly, cultural ambassadors should be able to engage with all aspects of their community and represent this in their ambassadorial role. Some emphasised the need for cultural ambassadors to represent their community as a whole, including people of different age groups, ethnic backgrounds, religions etc.
- Some respondents felt that a cultural ambassador should come from the area they represent - or should have lived there for a significant period of time. It was felt that people from outside the community would have less specialised and personal knowledge of the area and its history.

- Some stated that the role of the cultural ambassadors should be a paid role rather than voluntary.
- The work of cultural ambassadors and their purpose should be promoted to the community in order to raise their profile. Some suggested promoting the role of the cultural ambassador specifically to newcomers (especially if they are buying a second home).
- Many respondents referred to the benefits of using existing community structures. In particular, some felt that existing organisations such as the Urdd, *mentrau iaith*, and local town and community councils were already fulfilling much of the work of the proposed cultural ambassadors. Some suggested, therefore, that these existing community structures should be strengthened and celebrated rather than duplicated to enable cultural representation and public education at a local level.
- Newcomers to communities should be included and welcomed directly by cultural ambassadors in order to work with those who are considered most likely to have less involvement with the Welsh language and culture. Some respondents suggested that cultural ambassadors should provide 'welcome packs' for newcomers. Some also suggested that knowledge of the Welsh language, and the benefits of using the language, should be specifically prioritised by the cultural ambassador - for example, by offering free Welsh lessons to newcomers.

However, some respondents disagreed with the proposed plan. A number of reasons for disagreement were noted, including: concern over duplication of existing work; a feeling that this plan is inefficient in dealing with the economic inequality which is causing the housing problem; that the proposal was unrealistic in terms of newcomers engaging with the ambassadors; that such proposals come too late to adequately address the housing problem.

## Question 10: What specific factors should the commission consider in relation to sustaining Welsh as a community language?

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

Respondents identified the need for measures to **reduce or limit the number of second homes** in communities. Some offered more detailed comments suggesting monitoring the percentage of second homes in communities and setting limits or capping the numbers.

Respondents suggested that the impact of **migration** is an important factor that the commission should consider in maintaining Welsh as a community language. Respondents referred to recent trends since the pandemic including a perception that there had been an increase in the number of flexible workers who wanted to live in attractive rural and coastal areas. Some respondents proposed measures to mitigate the impacts of in-migration, for example providing **education or information to newcomers about Welsh language and culture** (e.g., 'welcome packs' or language awareness courses) and offering **free Welsh lessons**. Some respondents suggested that consideration should be given to imposing

linguistic conditions on newcomers who wish to buy houses or setting a minimum residency period before individuals gain the right to buy houses in Welsh-speaking communities.

Respondents emphasised the need to **support and promote the use of the Welsh language** in social contexts, including in the playground, at home, through cultural events and activities and in communities in general.

Respondents supported the **use of data and evidence** as a basis for implementing and monitoring any measures introduced. These responses included references to the importance of forecasting by drawing on the expertise of language planners.

The importance of **economic factors** was a prominent feature in responses especially in relation to the need to **reduce the outward migration** of young people and people of working age. Respondents referred to the need to:

- Secure high-quality local jobs and good wages.
- Avoid over-reliance on seasonal industries such as tourism.
- Support and incentivise businesses who operate or offer a service through the medium of Welsh.

A number of respondents referred to the need to consider **economic trends**, and their potential positive and negative impacts; especially the increase in home or hybrid working patterns. Some thought this pattern offered an opportunity to seek to **attract Welsh speakers to move (or return)** to Welsh-speaking communities. Linked to this, respondents noted the need to secure affordable housing for local people, with some stating that Welsh speakers should be given priority.

## **Question 11: What, in your view, will be the challenges facing the commission?**

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template. However, there was one theme that was more prominent in campaign responses, which is noted below.

The challenge most frequently raised by respondents was a **lack of funding** to implement the Commission's proposals and recommendations in a way that would have a significant positive impact. Many of these respondents referred to the scale of the challenge (and the number of different challenges), expressing concerns that it was too late for some communities as the language had deteriorated substantially.

Respondents noted that resisting **opposition from individuals and organisations who would be impacted** by the proposals / recommendations would also be a challenge that Welsh Government and its partners would need to face. Many of these respondents indicated that there could be legal and financial challenges from individuals and organisations who would oppose the proposals / recommendations, including landlords and second home owners. Linked to this, a number of respondents raised concerns about the strength of **market forces affecting housing**, which make the scale of the challenge significant even if the proposals were implemented.

*“Lack of funding. The inability to respond quickly enough to the market. Lack of a true understanding of the situation. Lack of powers to impact the housing market (isn't that the real challenge? The fact that there are economic factors beyond my power that drive prices up.”*

Respondents referred to **political and operational barriers** to implement the proposals / recommendations, including:

- Likely opposition from some political parties and groups that could hinder the commission's work.
- Systemic barriers resulting from slow or poor implementation processes (e.g., planning processes, consultation processes).

Respondents emphasised that a lack of **awareness and understanding** of the position of the Welsh language and the factors affecting the language, including among the people of Wales, was a challenge facing the commission. Many respondents commented that changing people's perceptions would be challenging due to apathy or disinterest among the population and lack of media coverage. Some also noted that there was a danger that some individuals and organisations would misinterpret or misrepresent the commission's proposals / recommendations, which could create further opposition.

Some respondents noted that **engaging effectively with the local population** was a challenge, to ensure that proposals reflect differences in communities and take into account the large variations between areas.

Among those responses that followed a campaign template, some expressed a view that **ensuring that organisations are transparent in their reporting** and do so in a way that would reflect the fragile position of the Welsh language, would be a challenge.

## **Question 12: Are there any examples, practices or instances of interest that could inform the commission's understanding of the factors that affect the language?**

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

Respondents cited examples of the impacts of **second home purchases** and **inward migration** generally on communities, including the repercussions to the linguistic profile of areas, language usage, and local services. Some respondents referred to the impacts they had observed in particular towns or villages over the years.

*“I live in a seaside village in west Wales. About 75% of local houses are either second homes or holiday homes. The village is empty during the winter months and the indigenous community is shrinking. Any houses that come up for sale are often sold at an unreasonably high price within hours e.g. a two-bedroom terraced house sold for £460,000 last summer.”*

Respondents provided examples of the impacts of inward migration and second homes on the **use of the Welsh language** at a community level and on changing language habits in Welsh-medium contexts. However, a number of respondents noted that the commission should consider examples of good practice and the successes of local sports clubs and cultural organisations (e.g. *mentrau iaith*) in promoting the use of the Welsh language, including in areas where there has been significant inward migration. Some respondents suggested that the commission should consult further with organisations when implementing any proposals, promoting examples of families who have migrated into communities and learnt the language.

*"... look and learn from examples of learners who have successfully integrated into their communities - there are great examples across Wales, especially in some of the areas covered here. Stories about things - e.g. committees, meetings and things that have always been monolingual - having to change from Welsh only to being bilingual - we need to ensure this doesn't happen in order to maintain the Welsh language as a community language. Switching to English when one person in the room who doesn't understand the language is not the answer - the answer is to offer learning support, more simultaneous translation facilities etc - and to promote the fact that all of these courses, support and facilities are available."*

Respondents noted that the commission should examine evidence and draw on the experience of **sociolinguistic experts**. Many referred to specific studies and examples from Wales (e.g. Bangor University's ARFer programme research, a recent evaluation of the Arfor programme) and beyond (e.g. research from the Gaeltacht in Ireland). Some cited examples of local efforts to increase language and cultural awareness (e.g., through information packs) and research on different methods of doing so.

Respondents referred to examples of **successes and challenges in Welsh-medium education**. Many cited examples of schools, and other community assets, having to close due to demographic changes caused by inward migration, outward migration and second home purchases. Respondents also noted that the commission should consider how to support, raise awareness and make the most of the successes of **immersion education** and Welsh-medium education in some areas of Wales.

Some respondents cited other examples including:

- **The repercussions of a lack of affordable housing** and the need to address this.
- **Businesses that have flourished** by embracing and offering Welsh-medium services.
- **Examples of economic, planning, and local education policies** that the commission should consider.
- **The repercussions of a lack of local, well-paid jobs** and the need to address this.
- Examples of **Welsh place names and property names being replaced with English names** by property owners.

**Question 13: What (more), alongside housing support, can be done to support local and particularly young people, to remain, live and work in their communities?**

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

Education was one of the main themes. The most popular suggestion was **integrating education about the history and culture of the local area into the school curriculum**. It was felt that young people were sometimes unaware of the richness of their own local histories, and many respondents suggested that educating young people could empower the younger generation to appreciate their communities. Other suggestions were made relating to education which included: increasing access to Welsh-medium education; improving the quality of local secondary education; and introducing a wider range of Welsh-medium higher education courses locally so that young people do not have to leave their local community for higher education.

Another prominent theme emerging from the responses was **the importance of maintaining and improving local service delivery** to ensure that the areas in question are viable places for young people to live. This includes low cost, frequent and reliable public transport, creating vibrant towns, running multi-purpose community centres, local schools etc. Many also mentioned improving the internet and broadband connection, which is slow for many respondents in rural areas. These suggestions were often raised in the context of increased flexible and home working, and the need to ensure that communities are able to access more flexible working arrangements.

**Comments relating to the economy and money** was another common theme. One suggestion raised by several respondents was the provision of funding for young people to start their own businesses in their local area. Many were of the view that this financial incentive was needed to make local enterprise a viable option. Many respondents also mentioned the need to improve local employment opportunities more generally. This included increasing the number of jobs available, as well as improving wages which, in the opinion of many respondents, are falling behind more urban areas. Some also outlined the need to diversify the local economy by introducing a wider range of jobs that attract young people and are viable for the future, such as innovation in technology and decarbonisation. Other suggestions relating to the economy included: devolving jobs in government and industry to rural regions; providing high-quality training opportunities for local young people; making Welsh compulsory for some posts to give young Welsh speakers an advantage. Some respondents brought the issue back to housing by describing the need for young people to have access to affordable housing, and the need to regulate second homes.

Finally, there was a prominent **culture and community theme** throughout the responses. In particular, many emphasised the need to promote to young people the importance of staying and settling in their community and the social and cultural benefits of doing so. This aligns with the view of some respondents who wish to see more being done to foster young people's pride in local areas. Many respondents described the need to improve leisure and cultural activities in rural communities, and many respondents noted that improving provision for young people in particular was an important part of supporting young people to stay, live and work in their communities.

## Question 14: Do you have any further comments or suggestions in relation to any of the specific schemes mentioned above?

There were no prominent themes in the responses to this question, and most respondents left the question blank, or noted that they had no additional comments to the answers provided in earlier questions. The main themes were:

- **A focus on improving the economy and jobs.** Many respondents felt there should be more focus on investing in rural and coastal areas and ensuring that good quality jobs are available to local people. This seemed to be key together with all the proposed schemes.
- **Promoting the language and culture.** Again, many respondents felt there needed to be a focus on action to support and promote the culture of Wales alongside the proposed schemes. It was felt that people moving into communities should be supported to learn about Wales and to learn the language. Secondly, it was felt that supporting and enhancing the culture and language would make the areas more attractive and appealing to young people. A small number of respondents compared the concept of protecting language and culture with protecting the environment and nature.
- Similarly to responses to previous questions, respondents again made suggestions on how to ensure **more housing is available to local people.** These included building more social housing, re-purposing buildings for residential use, and allowing local people to build their own homes.

Some took the opportunity in Question 14 to provide positive feedback on the consultation and some respondents urged the Welsh Government to act quickly on the proposals.

## Question 15: What kind of local interventions would you want to see to promote the importance of Welsh place names, encourage their retention and to maintain the Welsh language as a visual part of our communities?

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

There were four main suggestions regarding local interventions (and these formed part of the campaign responses): (i) **legislation** to protect place and property names (ii) **finances** for changing the name of a house; (iii) compulsory **planning application** to change the name of a house and (iv) **monitoring** house name changes being part of the role of cultural ambassadors.

*“If someone intends to change an indigenous Welsh name then planning permission should be obtained and it should be made clear that permission*

*will only be granted for exceptional cases, and that there is a very strong presumption against any such change.”*

**Education** was also **prominent** theme, and respondents want to see place names and their importance to Welsh history more firmly embedded in the new school Curriculum. It was felt that efforts were needed to educate and provide more information to people moving into areas, and that a welcome pack for all new property owners (especially if they were not local) outlining its history and context would be an important step across Wales.

Some felt that councils should be given more powers to control the naming of properties and businesses and that the **use of names by the private sector** needed to be addressed. Similarly, some respondents wanted action on the order of placenames on road signs, with a focus on: naming attractions and what is displayed on brown tourist signs; addressing place names on maps; and working with the Post Office on what names are acceptable and in use.

## **Question 16: What else should be considered as part of the Welsh Language Communities Housing Scheme?**

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

Respondents proposed **imposing conditions on individuals who want to buy houses in areas of linguistic sensitivity**, to protect the Welsh language. These included suggestions that newcomers should have to learn Welsh or participate in activities to raise their awareness of Welsh language and culture. Suggestions were made regarding financial support to Welsh speakers and giving them priority to buy and rent houses locally.

Respondents again referred to **limiting the number of second homes** in a given area and making more housing available for local people. Some respondents noted the need to consider the position of non-Welsh-speaking inhabitants. Many referred to the need for more robust Local Development Plans which ensure that all developments must strengthen local culture and the Welsh language.

Some respondents referred to the adverse impact of rising rental costs and proposed that a **duty should be placed on local authorities to provide rental properties** at affordable prices. Respondents commented that town and community councils and community groups have a key role to play in this respect, and that creating specific resources and support for these councils would be useful, to allow them to build on their existing extended community networks and that they needed specific resources and support.

Respondents stated that they should **promote businesses** who are innovative in supporting their employees to learn and use the Welsh language. Another idea was to target and support young people - and Welsh speakers - **who want to return to the communities where they were raised**.

## Question 17: What changes would you make to the proposals presented in this plan to improve their effectiveness?

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

The majority of respondents to this question referred to their previous responses; those responses are not repeated in this section. Some respondents stated that they had no suggestions on how to strengthen the proposals, or that they did not need strengthening.

Among the respondents who made other comments, some expressed a need to **ensure that proposals are strong** and compel individuals and organisations to implement them. Some referred to the need to legislate to achieve this and some respondents stated that **local planning procedures should be strengthened** in order to achieve the objectives of the proposals.

Linked to the above, some respondents emphasised the **need to act urgently**, given the scale of decline in the percentage of Welsh speakers in many communities. Respondents expressed the need for immediate action by referring to recent demographic and economic trends (e.g., the tendency to work from home which makes rural areas more attractive).

Respondents suggested that the proposals should be changed by **imposing conditions on individuals who want to buy houses** in Welsh speaking communities. These included suggestions that newcomers should have to commit to learning the Welsh language and / or participate in activities to raise their awareness of Welsh language and culture before being allowed to buy a home in areas of linguistic sensitivity.

Some respondents felt there was a need for **more support for Welsh speakers** to be able to buy houses and stay within their communities. Others considered the priority to be **supporting local residents** regardless of language. Some referred to the need to **promote the use of the Welsh language**, including supporting a range of education, social, cultural, and sporting initiatives.

Other responses included the following suggestions:

- The need for effective local consultation.
- Further powers for agencies / programmes (e.g., Arfor) to operate in areas with high percentages of Welsh speakers.
- Taking on board good practice from other areas.
- Consider how to deal with sensitive situations where Welsh speakers who have moved away from the area in which they were brought up own a second home only through family connections or by inheriting property.

**Question 18: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.**

The themes arising most frequently in the responses are set out below. The main themes to emerge from all responses (including responses received on a campaign template) did not differ significantly from those that did not follow a campaign template, so no differentiation is made below.

Many respondents referred to their responses to previous questions or indicated that they had no further comments to add. Respondents who commented identified the following issues:

- Robust and urgent action is needed to address the challenges facing the Welsh language;
- Local residents and / or Welsh speakers need to be prioritised in the schemes under consideration.
- General comments on the importance of the Welsh language.
- General support for the proposals and support for co-operatives.
- Local planning processes need to be strengthened to take account of Welsh language considerations.
- Comments on the importance of high-quality jobs within Welsh speaking communities.
- General concerns about market forces and how this may limit the success of any interventions.
- The requirement for effective local consultation when implementing the proposals.
- The need for a property act.
- Criticism of the consultation questionnaire, including the complexity of both the language and questions.