Independent Review Panel on Community and Town Councils in Wales

Annex B - Engagement Report

Introduction

The Independent Review Panel was established in July 2017 by the Welsh Government.

We were established to:

- explore the potential role of local government below Local Authority councils, drawing on best practice

- define the most appropriate model(s)/structure(s) to deliver this role

- consider how these models and structures should be applied across Wales. This will include consideration of any situations in which they would not be necessary or appropriate.
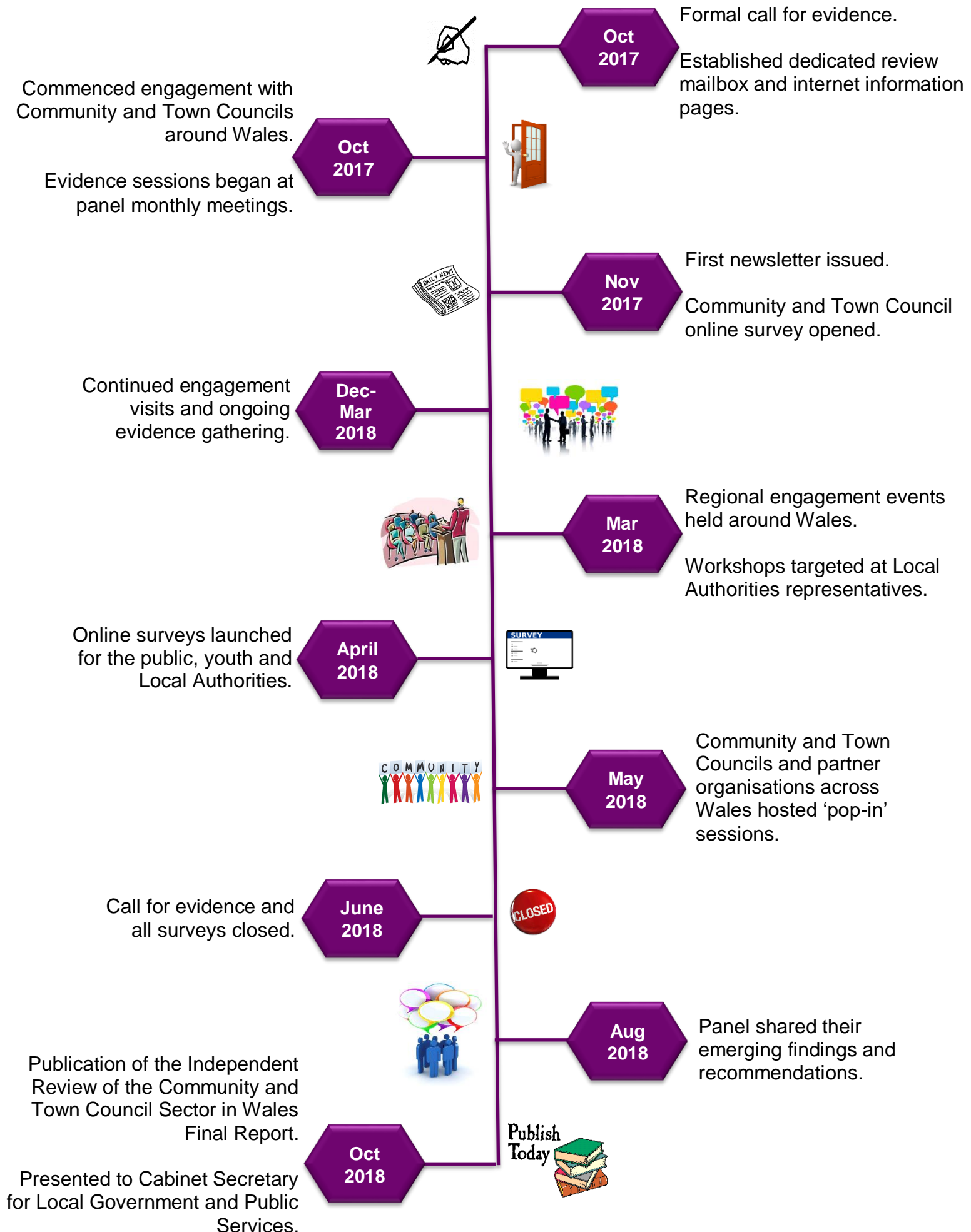
We were given a deliberately broad remit, with the scope to be radical if necessary.

Aim of this report

To support our work, we undertook a suite of engagement to seek evidence and gathers views from Community and Town Councils themselves, key stakeholders in the community and members of the public.

This engagement report sets out how we engaged and who we engaged with. It also includes an analysis of the responses we received, as well as a snapshot of early feedback on our recommendations.

Timeline of Engagement and Communications

Oct 2017
Formal call for evidence.

Established dedicated review mailbox and internet information pages.

Oct 2017
Commenced engagement with Community and Town Councils around Wales.

Evidence sessions began at panel monthly meetings.

Nov 2017
First newsletter issued.

Community and Town Council online survey opened.

Dec-Mar 2018
Continued engagement visits and ongoing evidence gathering.

Mar 2018
Regional engagement events held around Wales.

Workshops targeted at Local Authorities representatives.

April 2018
Online surveys launched for the public, youth and Local Authorities.

May 2018
Community and Town Councils and partner organisations across Wales hosted 'pop-in' sessions.

June 2018
Call for evidence and all surveys closed.

Aug 2018
Panel shared their emerging findings and recommendations.

Oct 2018
Publication of the Independent Review of the Community and Town Council Sector in Wales Final Report.

Presented to Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services.

Summary of Engagement Activities

A dedicated page on the Welsh Government website was created to act as a central point for information regarding the review with opportunities for people to get involved and have their voice heard.

In October 2017 an engagement and communications plan was developed and implemented to support the Review. This was targeted at reaching Community and Town Councils and the communities which they serve, as well as other individuals and groups who were anticipated to be affected by any changes to the sector. The target audience therefore consisted of:

- All Community and Town Councils
- All Local Authorities
- All community members (general public)
- Youth groups
- Voluntary and community sector organisations including County Voluntary Councils
- Relevant representative bodies such as, One Voice Wales, Society of Local Council Clerks, the Welsh Local Government Association and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action
- Individuals who had previously expressed an interest in the review.

We sent information introducing ourselves and our aims to the targeted audience using a variety of media, including:

- Emails
- Posted letters
- Welsh Government website
- Welsh Government social media.

Activities agreed and implemented as part of the suite of engagement included:

- A dedicated mailbox was set up for all review communications. Adolygiad.CTC.Review@gov.wales

- A dedicated hashtag was established for the review #MyCommunityMyCouncil

- Evidence was taken at Review Panel meetings

- Submission of written evidence was also encouraged

- Visits to individual Community and Town Councils across Wales took place in order to gather evidence and views

- Established partner organisation meetings/events across Wales were utilised to obtain views and feedback

- Regional engagement events were held across Wales

- Targeted workshops were held with Local Authorities seeking views on particular aspects of the review

- Targeted online surveys were published

- National 'pop in' sessions were held across Wales

- Regular bi-monthly newsletters were issued. You can find current and previous newsletters online at: http://gov.wales/topics/localgovernment/communitytowncouncils/review-of-community-town-council-sector/?lang=en

Evidence Sessions

From October 2017 until March 2018 a range of bodies were invited to meet with us during our Panel meetings to give oral evidence.

Bodies who were invited to give evidence at our meetings included:

- One Voice Wales – October 2017
- Wales Audit Office – October 2017
- Society of Local Council Clerks – November 2017
- Cwmbran Community Council – November 2017
- Llanelli Rural Council – November 2017
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action – December 2017
- Vale of Glamorgan Public Service Board – December 2017
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council – December 2017
- The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales – January 2018
- The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – January 2018
- Solva Community Council and Solva Care – February 2018.

These bodies also often provided written evidence to us to accompany their oral evidence. At times written evidence was requested where attendance at the evidence sessions was not needed, when the Review Panel was considering different delivery models from the Penllyn Partnership, and the North Montgomeryshire cluster outlining their work to establish a Community Interest Company.

Many Community and Town Councils also provided evidence when requested on topics including their co-option process and diversity to inform papers prepared for the Panel meetings.

Written Evidence

We received 27 pieces of written evidence in total. The written evidence received varied from information we had directly requested and unprompted submissions from stakeholders. Unprompted evidence was received from organisations such as Alcohol Concern Cymru, Play Wales, Churches Together in Wales and Big Lottery all outlining their views on the future of Local Governance in Wales. We also had formal submissions from One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Council Clerks and Welsh Local Government Association.

Visits to Community and Town Councils across Wales

From November 2017 we visited various Community and Town Councils around Wales, individually and collectively, to collect evidence and views from the sector itself. We found these visits very informative and helped to develop our understanding of the sector. These visits included:

- Abergavenny Town Council
- Abertillery and Llanhilleth Town Council
- Bay of Colwyn Town Council
- Boncath Community Council
- Capel Curig Community Council
- Clunderwen Community Council
- Crickhowell Town Council
- Cwmdu & District Community Council
- Dyffryn Clydach Community Council
- Graig Community Council
- Gwaun Cae Gurwen Community Council
- Hook Community Council
- Llandinam Community Council
- Llandudno Town Council
- Llangynidr Community Council
- Llangattock Community Council
- Llangwm Community Council
- Letterston Community Council
- Milford Haven Town Council
- Neyland Community COuncil
- Ogwen Partnership
- Pembroke Dock Council
- Pembroke Town Council
- Pontardawe Town Council
- Rogerstone Community Council
- Saundersfoot Community Council
- Tenby Town Council
- Vale of Grwyney Community Council.

Attendance at partner organisation meetings/events across Wales to obtain views and feedback

Over the course of the Review, we as Panel members and our Secretariat on our behalf attended a variety of meetings, events and forums to give updates on the progress of the Review as well as promote involvement in the Review. These included:

One Voice Wales National Conference	September 2017
PLANED Fit for the Future Event	November 2017
Society of Local Council Clerks Glamorgan Branch	January 2018
WLGA Heads of Policy Meeting	March 2018
Society of Local Council Clerks Powys Branch	March 2018
One Voice Wales National Executive Committee	March 2018
Society of Local Council Clerks Larger Council Forum	March 2018
Vale of Glamorgan Community Liaison Committee	March 2018
Bridgend County Council Forum	March 2018
Flintshire County Council Forum	May 2018

Regional Engagement Events

During March we organised a set of large engagement events across Wales. Five events were planned for March 2018 but like everyone else across Wales, we could not control the weather! Our planned event for Dolfor, Newtown was snowed off at the start of March…and again mid-March. We decided not to reschedule the event, but made sure those who were due to attend the mid-Wales event had the opportunity to share their views through other avenues.

Whilst the events had been open to all stakeholders and members of the public, the majority of attendees were members and clerks of Community and Town Councils. The events were well attended with 197 people attending across the four events. We gathered a range of views and suggestions many of which were mirrored across the regions.

The North West Wales event took place in Caernarfon, North East Wales event took place in Wrexham, Cardiff hosted the South East Wales event and Carmarthen the South West Wales. Below is a snap shot of the feedback captured across all the events. The quotes you see are verbatim, taken from attendee's written feedback on the day.

Q1. What should Community and Town Councils be responsible for?

"*Voice of the community*"
"*Represent Community from grass roots level*'
"*Depends on budget! (no staff no resources to do more)*"
"*Improving experience of life in local area*"

"Town hall, allotments, bus shuttles, re-cycle centre, open areas, planning, community centres, family centres, cinemas. County Councils saying what their responsible for"

"Services which require a local solution rather than a one size fits all solution, imposed by county council e.g. planning"

"Community and Town Councils should have the choice to deliver what they think is best for their communities and working in partnership / collaboration"

"Community and Town Councils should have a business plan so they can plan for communities future"

Q2 - How should they operate?

"Capacity, capability and skills of councillors - require change management and new skills"

"More powers then more engagement from young people - can make things happen. Look at local needs"

"Shared roles - Smaller Community and Town Councils coming together to employ a clerk - create a separate entity to employ etc."

"Work in partnership with other neighbouring Community and Town Councils - cluster - share costs / equipment & staff. Be visible / deal with local issues / partnership - regular communications"

"Clerks role needs to be highlighted / professionalised (they are not PA) each clerk roll is as important (need to ensure qualifications are appropriate & all aware of why needed/what they are!)"

"Can only do so much (lack of capacity / Equipment)"

Q3 - What's standing in their way to deliver for the local community?

"Lack of relationship / ongoing dialogue with Local Authorities"

"some things take too long – bureaucracy"

"Bullying / harassment within the Community and Town Council or by members of the community if you are a member of the Community and Town Council"

"Skills - Legal, Governance, IT, Property, Finance, HR, Contracts - Not always available"

"limit on precept, how can be spent on and one project."

"Money"

"Diversifying training to include wider remit i.e. how to engage with younger people"

"Lack of clarity about role. People don't know what we are and what we do"

Q4 - How do councils ensure they best represent their local community?

"Develop a community engagement plan"

"Community consultation events"

"Change the profile from white male 50+"

"Develop a closer relationship with the public and getting all local Cllrs to engage with their wards and areas"

"Use social media to get younger people involved in the community council (nextdoor.com) (survey monkey - short simple surveys) live Q&A Facebook feeds. Newsletters 2 x PA. update what spend £ on - need to think about older population. Push through letterbox"
"Councillors not interested in changing things"
"Good links to local groups / associations"

In addition to the above we also held smaller drop in sessions where we invited representatives of Community and Town Councils from surrounding areas. These drop-in events provided stakeholders a further avenue to share their views and an opportunity to consider the same questions posed at the larger engagement events.

Merthyr Tydfil   February 2018
Aberystwyth   April 2018

Local Authority Workshops

Four workshops were specifically designed to gather views from Local Authorities. The four workshops were held at the Welsh Government offices in Swansea, Merthyr Tydfil, Aberystwyth and Llandudno in April. Thirty representatives from across the Local Authorities in Wales attended these workshops.

Under the four identified themes of the review, below is snap shot of the comments given.

What Community and Town Councils are?
'There are inconsistencies between all Community and Town Councils'
'The smaller sized ones don't encourage interest / skills to the role'
'Size of a Community or Town Council will be determined by the 'ask' and the expectations placed on them going forward'
'There could be a case to abolish Community and Town Councils if there is a lack of interest in this tier of Local Government'
'There are difficulties where there is a lack of coverage of Community and Town Councils – particularly around delegating functions.'

What Community and Town Councils Do?
'There is a need for Community and Town Councils to have an Area Committee approach.'
'Community and Town Councils should be responsible for local delivery.'
'The powers of Community and Town Councils are archaic.'
'Community and Town Councils have no duties on how they operate generally.'
'There is polarisation in appetite between the smallest Community and Town Councils and the largest ones.'

How Community and Town Councils Do it?
'Some councillors do not understand the legal issues / statutory requirements of Community and Town Councils.'

'Some councillors are not even attending basic Code of Conduct training.'
'In relation to expert advice, Local Authorities have corporate support and a whole range of expertise. Whereas clerks can be out on a limb without a multitude of support.'
'Clerks are vital. Some are capable and some might not want a professional qualification.'
'Some current processes for Community and Town Councils are archaic, e.g the lack of time [it takes] for questions to be posed and answers to be given.'

How Community and Town Councils are Held to Account

'There is no consistency in governance with some Community and Town Councils operating as they wish.'
'There is a need for consistency in governance.'
'The make-up of Community and Town Councils needs to include individuals who are equally unbiased.'
'Uncontested elections are a problem. Significant numbers of representatives were either elected unopposed or co-opted in 2017.'

National 'Pop-In' sessions

'Pop-In' sessions were held (map at item 1) in May to allow residents to share their views in a location close to them. It was intended for these events to be held on the same day for maximum impact. The majority held a 'pop-in' session on the 24 May 2018. A handful of councils chose to combine their 'pop-in' session with events previously arranged in May within their community.

Those hosting an event were provided with all the resources they needed to publicise their event and capture feedback. Feedback forms mirrored the questions asked as part of the public and youth surveys and were provided bilingually. As well as enabling potentially hundreds of opportunities to take part in the review, it also fitted naturally with the role that Community and Town Councils already play in engaging their communities.
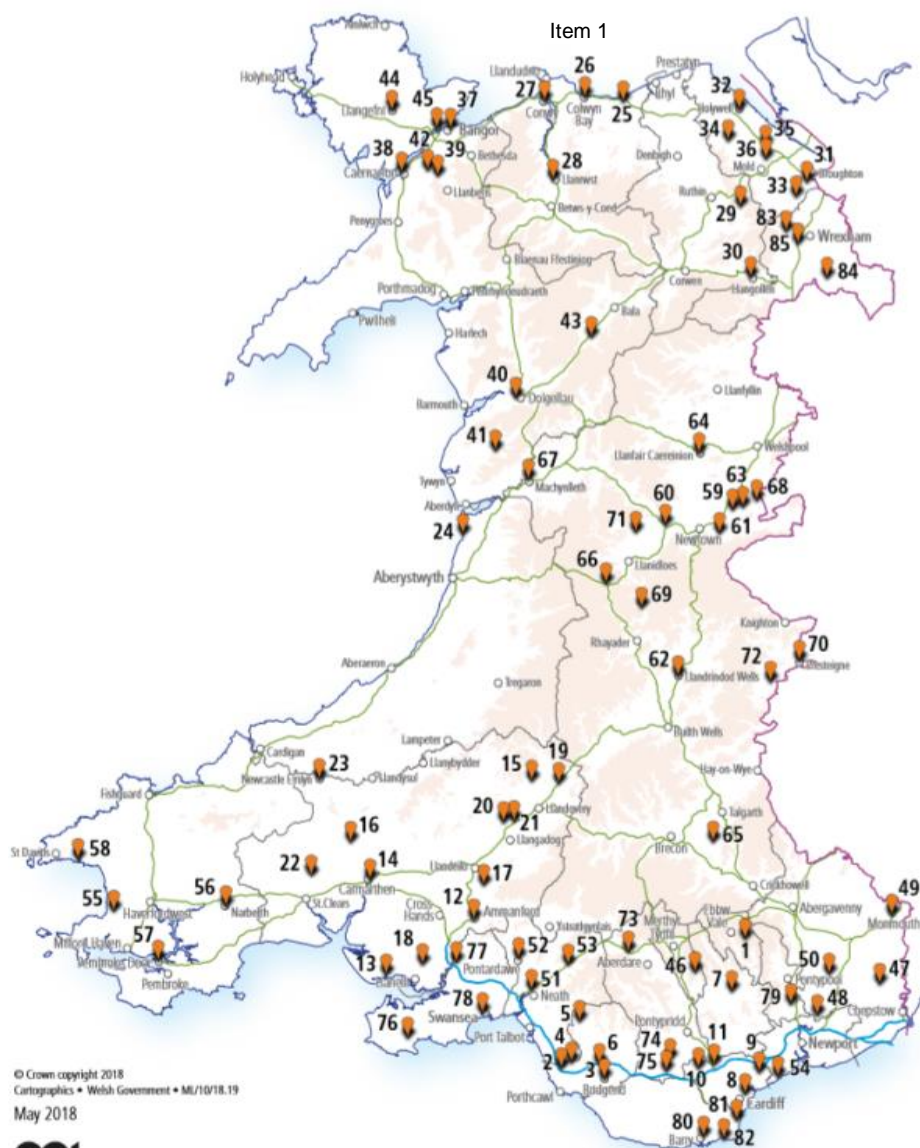
Invitations to hold a 'pop in' session sent	Over 800	All Community and Town Councils, WCVA, County Voluntary Councils, Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST), Boy Scouts Cymru, Girl Guides, YMCA, Church of Wales, Youth Cymru.
Invitations Accepted	86	
Invitations Declined	14	Those who declined to host the event stated reasons such as lack of interest, lack of notice (could not get agreement from council within the time period), lack of availability and lack of capacity.
No Reply	700+	
Overall Attendance	520+	Many of those who hosted sessions did not know final figures for those that attended.
Overall returned feedback	605+	

Feedback forms were based on the public and youth survey questions, with opportunity to provide additional feedback on additional forms.

When analysing the responses, the majority of feedback forms were used to raise specific issues with their local Community and Town Councils as well as make suggestions on improvements. Comments highlighted the confusion over what the Community and Town Council is responsible for raising issues including 'stop building houses', 'clean up the dog mess', 'sort out the litter' and 'build a by-pass'.

Online Surveys

Our call for evidence was supported by four online surveys, targeted at the engagement groups identified and bespoke questions were developed.

The online surveys were publicised through the Welsh Government website and were also shared by stakeholders.

The four surveys were hosted online at:
http://gov.wales/topics/localgovernment/communitytowncouncils/review-of-community-town-council-sector/?lang=en

All four surveys were also available in hard copy and offered at engagement events, workshops and pop in sessions for completion.

Participation in the surveys was encouraged through avenues such as:

- Email
- Newsletter
- Social Media
- Welsh Government website

Others who assisted in promoting the surveys included:

- Rent Smart Wales – included an article in their monthly newsletter to those who have signed up to updates.
- GWLAD – included an article in their January 2018 e-newsletter reaching rural and farming communities.
- Public Service Boards – included an article in their February bulletin
- Welsh Government Parenting Branch – sent an email to all Family Information Services promoting the review and survey.
- Youth, Disability and BME Organisations in Wales were also asked to promote the surveys.

Total number of responses received for each survey was as follows:
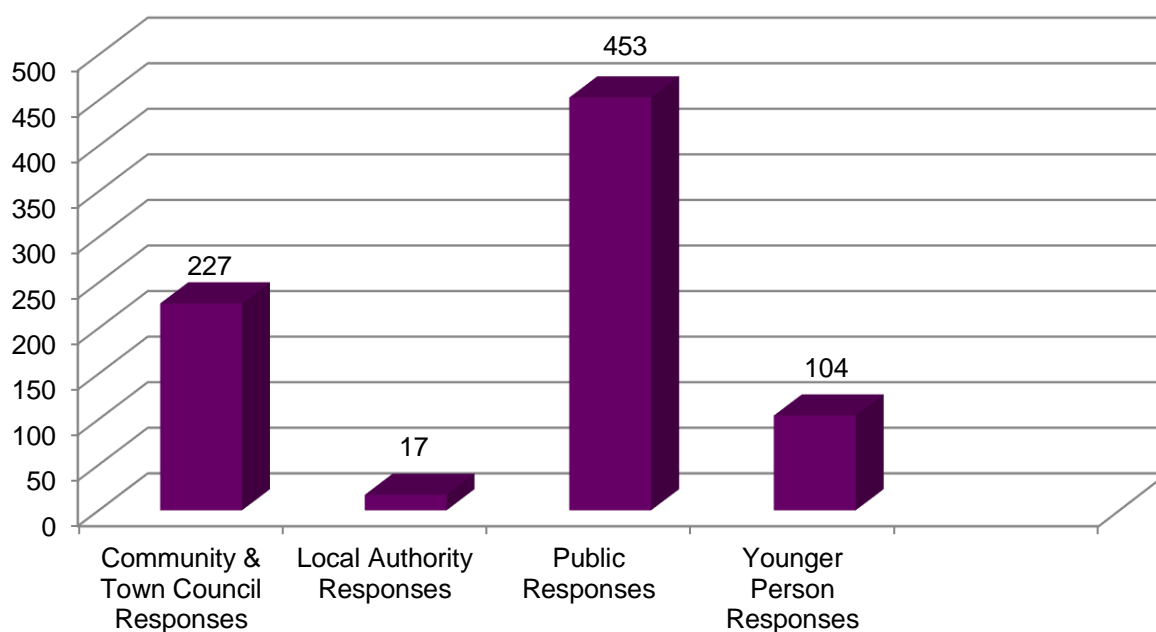
Summary of responses – What you told us

Overview of Feedback from Regional Engagement Events held in March 2018

Caernarfon

What should CTCs be responsible for?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Community impacting things	5
What they can do better than the Local Authority	4
Reflect local wants and needs	3
The voice of the community	2
They are different and should be treated differently	1
Clustering can help smaller CTCs pick up services	1
Clustering shouldn't be county led	1
Clustering doesn't work – should be one body	1
Service delivery is different from Community Voice	1
If you make CTCs bigger, WG will put something smaller in place	1
Don't reinvent the wheel	1
If they do more, they need more resources	1

How should they operate?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Elected Mayor / Paid 'Town' member for specific areas	2
Partner with outside bodies	1
CTCs can access grants where as County Council cannot	1
Can only do so much (lack of resources / capacity)	4
Difficult when the wider reform picture isn't formalised	1
Inconsistencies currently where CTCs can do what they want	1
Honesty, Openness, Accountability	2
Contact voters	1
Professionalise the role of clerks through partnerships (similar to Ogwen)	2
A new way of working (Similar to other countries)	2
More interest / more respect	1
Clerk is important and needs assistance	1

What's standing in their way to deliver for the local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Lack of relationship / ongoing dialogue with LA (dumping services)	11
Capacity – bringing in extra staff can cause space problems / hidden costs	7
Finance	6
Lack of skills / expertise	6
Mandated role does not always consider what CTCs can physically do (WAO Requirements)	4
Resources	4
Lack of leadership from Welsh Government	4
Bureaucracy	3
WG naivety on what CTCs can do and how they operate	2
Changing requirements on staff and councillors	2

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Support and guidance	2
CTCs being relied on as the contact for the LA	1
Clerks should support, not deliver	1
Health and Safety regulations	1
LA's reluctant to let go of what they have	1
Bullying / Harassment within CTC	1
Data Protection Requirements	1
The closer the decisions are taken to the people they affect the better	1
Need to share good practice	1
Support for One Voice Wales	1

How do councils ensure they best represent their local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Engage community (Hold surgeries / surveys / public meetings / Website / social media)	11
Lack of candidates	3
Accountability / Scrutiny	2
Make links with other groups	2
Youth involvement	1
Councillors not interested in changing things	1
Develop a place plan	1
Co-opting good but reflective of the current council	1
Less community spirit	1
Good examples of delivery	1
Need expert advisers	1

Wrexham

What should CTCs be responsible for?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
What the Community wants them to do	3
Local services	2
Should have flexibility in their powers	1
Non-Stat services	1
Services being passed on without budget	1
Depends on the budget	1
Representing the community	1
Improving life in the local area	1
WG should dictate size and then aim	1
More influence on existing service delivery	1

How should they operate?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Funding (Direct / other models)	3
Specialist 'expert' knowledge	3
Professionalised clerk	3
Work together (SLA's between councils) & share advice	2
More support for smaller CTCs	1
Access to IT / Social Media	1
Money to come with services	1
Not just about service delivery. Legislation being approached differently by	1

all	
One size doesn't fit all	1
Overcome those who don't want training	1
Lack of capacity	1
Keeping identity	1

What's standing in their way to deliver for the local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
More visible funding streams	2
Short transfers / discussions with the LA	1
Barriers around legislation and double taxation	1
HUB councils	1
Limit on precept (section 137)	1
Maintaining identity when partnership working	1
Joint purpose	1
Lack of diversity	1
Time for training	1
Expertise of clerk	1
Little influence on County budget	1
Lack of expertise	1

How do councils ensure they best represent their local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Engage with them through a variety of ways	2
Manage expectations	1
Engage younger people	1
Help and support to engage a wider diversity	1
Not sure if core service would work	1
Local knowledge	1
Fundraising	1

Carmarthen

What should CTCs be responsible for?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Local Non-Stat Services	12
Better relationship with County Council	5
Lack of finance	4
Too many councils – all shapes and sizes	3
Local solutions rather than one size fits all	3
Place / 5-year plans	3
Listen to local community	3
What about areas without CTCs	2
Clarity on County Council role	2
Tourism	1
Bureaucracy is tough for smaller CTCs	1
Collaboration based on defined areas but keep local representation	1
County to take on all stat services including legal matters	1
Part of local community framework of provision	1
Traditions are needed but are we holding onto the past	1
Health and Safety	1

Lack of powers	1
Annual Plan	1
Double Taxation	1
Limits (section 137)	1

How should they operate?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Collaborating with neighbours for certain services (need trust)	6
Too many CTCs, structures and boundaries get in the way	4
Minimum compulsory training	4
Engage with the community / younger people	3
Accountability	2
Allowances for Councillors (including attendance allowance)	2
Better support network for councils	2
Change of Legislation	2
WG directive	2
Share clerks – simpler administration	2
Attendance should be mandatory	2
Share best practice	2
Better relationship with the County Council	2
Better understand the role of the clerk	1
Committee / Sub Committees	1
Support network for clerks	1
Powers for services	1
Need to know what we can legally object to	1
Trading opportunities	1
Share back office functions	1
Access to business rates	1
Too many rules	1
Partnering with other community organisations	1
No party politics	1
Transparency	1
Job description for clerk & councillor	1

What's standing in their way to deliver for the local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Funding streams (access to grants)	5
Bureaucracy	4
Better relationship with County Council	4
Resources	3
Apathy	3
Advice for CTCs	2
Training of councillors	2
Community elected Mayor / Impartial Chair	2
Allowances	2
Digital inclusion / competence	2
Speed / processes	2
Lack of diversity	1
Use of social media to engage community	1
Attitude of members	1
Language / Terms used can put off people	1
Establish CTCs where they don't exist	1

Boundaries	1
Lack of interest in engagement	1
Governance	1
Double taxation	1
Seeing new councillors as rocking the boat	1
Society is changing	1
Accountability	1

How do councils ensure they best represent their local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Engage with community through various mechanisms	6
Communication to and from the community	2
Non political	2
Liaise with community regularly	1
Fixed term for councillors	1
Act as the local voice	1
Small payment does not attract younger people	1
Lack of diversity	1
Cost of election	1

Cardiff

What should CTCs be responsible for?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Local Services	15
Planning	14
One size doesn't fit all	5
Including communities in conversations	5
Should be down to CTC	4
Well being Act – five ways of working	3
Place plans that fit into the local development plan	3
Annual assessment for competence	2
Share best practice	2
How can you have more responsibilities if other reviews are looking to reduce number of councillors	2
What the community needs	2
Strategic links / better relationships	2
Prevention rather than cure / proactive not reactive	2
More responsibilities and powers	1
Communities are quick to challenge	1
Precept increase can be difficult	1
Responsibility for or resistance to spend precept	1
More weight in consultations	1
Encourage innovation	1
Community hubs	1
Strategic thinking	1
Community Cohesion	1
Services not dumped on CTCs	1
Link to education	1

How should they operate?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Training for members and clerks – online mechanism	10
Shared expert advice	5
Good relationships with LA and partners	5
Pool clerks – but could impact local knowledge	5
Work together / sharing roles	4
Competency of CTCs – what does a good CTC look like	3
Youth representatives	3
Sharing best practice	3
Funding	3
Corporate Plan / Vision	3
Explain role to community	3
Better support for councils	2
Service delivery and representation	2
Community need	2
Skills of councillors	2
Conduct of councillors	1
Clerks overwhelmed with the amount of information – should be summarised	1
Accountability	1
If bigger, more difficult to engage	1
Balance between having things / services	1
Abide by current laws	1
Volunteer in community to deliver projects	1
Employers to give time to council duties (i.e. training)	1
Engagement	1
Non-contributory pension scheme	1
Clear role between CTC and County	1
Induction process for clerks	1
Change local model of Code of Conduct	1
Capacity	1
Training ahead of legislation	1
Expenses for councillors	1

What's standing in their way to deliver for the local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Money (including caps)	14
Election costs	8
Politics	7
Relationships with LAs	6
Lack of understanding of CTCs	5
Sifting through information – need summary	4
Lack of engagement / knowledge	3
Not enough weight given to views of a CTC	3
Match funding for training	3
No join up of layers to Welsh Government	3
Compulsory Training	3
Advice and support for candidates	3
Support for One Voice Wales	2
Clarity of responsibility	2
Co-options	2

Double taxation	2
Support for establishing a CTC	2
Relevance of wellbeing act to CTCs	2
Councillors with 'old views'	2
Lack of capacity	2
Lack of coverage	2
Not enough recognition of the clerk or councillor	1
Numbers of councillors (planned reduction)	1
Pressures on CTCs around remuneration	1
Non-stat services	1
Dual hatted ness can help relationships	1
Lack of response – slow	1
Lack of skills	1
Time	1
Voluntary status	1
Use of local expertise even if they are not a councillor	1

How do councils ensure they best represent their local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Engage young people	8
Link with schools	5
Community engagement plan	1
Community engagement through variety of ways	22
Democratic elections	2
Tell the community what they do	2
Viability	1
Increase diversity	15
Need to make it appealing	2
Consider commitments	3
Set attainment goals and actions	2
Have more representatives	1
Mandatory public sessions	1
Lack of consistent approach in engagement	1
Elections put candidates off	1

Overview of Feedback from Local Authority Workshops held in April 2018

What Community and Town Councils are?

Attendees identified an inconsistency between Community and Town Councils with some smaller one doing little more than covering essential running costs. There are different types of Community and Town Councils recognising the difference between Town and Rural councils. There are also hybrids and different dynamics but ultimately one size doesn't fit all. Some Community and Town Councils are really good however there are a lot of really poor Community and Town Councils. Some Community and Town Councils are unable to grasp the concept of what they are there for and treat money as if its their own - not spending it even if it's for benefit of community.

It was felt that if there is pressure on Local Authorities to work more regionally, an important role for Community and Town Councils is to ensure demographic representation closer to the community. Community and Town Councils should not be abolished as they know the issues of their communities but a change is needed for them to be more efficient. Community and Town Councils also need more power to achieve this role. If Community and Town Councils had additional powers, then there is a need to trust Community and Town Councils to work responsibly and not interfere too much.

What Community and Town Councils Do?

In relation to delivery of services, these needed to be delivered from the right place at the right time. Whether this should be Community and Town Councils – that's questionable. Community groups in areas without Community and Town Councils are achieving and supporting the community.

Views were expressed that many Community and Town Councils believe their only role is to have apathy and complain. However, there has been some success across Wales in keeping services open by getting Community and Town Councils to contribute to their running. Most of the small rural councils find it difficult to do anything because of size. Smaller Community and Town Councils are not happy to explore a partnership model because they want to be independent and believe the bigger town council will subsume them. This way of working is effective and avoids duplication.

Attendees felt past discussions held between Local Authorities and Community and Town Councils gave the feeling that Community and Town Councils were limited by their aspirations and capacity. In addition, Community and Town Councils have an eclectic mix of powers which needs to be reviewed.

How Community and Town Councils Do it?

Some current processes for Community and Town Councils are archaic, for example the lack of time for questions to be posed and answers to be given. This should form part of standard practice and examples of good and very bad practice could be highlighted.

In relation to expert advice, it was noted Local Authorities have corporate support and a whole range of expertise. Clerks can be out on a limb without a multitude of support. There is a need for a culture change in Community and Town Councils going to the clerk for everything. Community and Town Councils are the employer so if the clerk hasn't got the tools they need, they need to find it. The dynamic nature of the Community and Town Council can often depend on how dynamic the clerk is.

Some Local Authorities have a forum to consult on a quarterly basis with Community and Town Councils in their area, however in some areas the contact varies depending on the time of the year. In Powys in particular, there is no formal regular mechanism and as a clerk, it can be quite isolating. Clerks who are members of SLCC get support. It is important for clerks to share experiences with other clerks. In relation to expert / technical advice, Local Authority monitoring officer provides

advice on the code of conduct but in relation to other matters (such as employment) there is no advice or support available.

All clerks should have a professional qualification as councillors look to clerks to give advice on their role. One Voice Wales offers training on the role of the councillor however it is unclear how many councillors undertake the training. New councillors want to undertake training but longer standing members do not. This should be a core requirement.

Dual hatted members can skew decisions and provide conflicts of interest. Nevertheless, it can be both positive and negative benefits to Community and Town Councils. It should be a choice of the member and it may be that with an expanded role for Community and Town Councils, it would exclude local councillors because of time constraints. County councillors should engage with Community and Town Councils in their areas regularly but it was recognised this can be difficult when there are a large number in your area.

How Community and Town Councils are Held to Account

Attendees felt that despite many Community and Town Councils councillors believing they are volunteers, they are elected representatives who are responsible for public money. The Independent Remuneration Panel could be asked to look this again if the roles and responsibilities of Community and Town Councils and Councillors change.

The Local Government Act 1972 needs revising to bring it into the 21st Century. For example, notice of vacancies should be displayed online and shared through social media as well as local notice boards. Stronger policing of the code of conduct is needed (currently through the monitoring officer and Local Authority). It was agreed that there should be a core set of standards for all Community and Town Councils.

It is believed that if Community and Town Councils will have a larger role there will be an issue with accountability and governance. It was felt that Community and Town Councils would need more support to understand their responsibilities and conflicts of interest.

It was felt that there needs to be more clarity around funding and Community and Town Councils need to be accountable for the public money they spend (value for money.

Public Online Survey - Summary of results

Q1: Are you aware of a Community or Town Council in your area?
The vast majority, almost 94%, of people (425) answered Yes. A very small proportion of responses (3% or 14 people) answered No. The same small percentage (3% or 14 people) left this question blank.

Q2: Do you know what your council does?

Again the majority of people (74% or 336 responses) answered Yes. But around a quarter (24% or 110 responses) responded that they didn't know what their council does. 7 people left this question blank.

Q3: What would you like to see your council do?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Local Needs / Services including Bus services, local business, rights of way, highways, environment, pavements, social cohesion, fly tipping, affordable housing, challenge road safety, education, cash machines, elderly support, regeneration, support vulnerable people, road safety, transport, economic development.	118
Oversee and be proactive with community engagement (listen to concerns / views/ answer emails / community events)	72
Work together for and better represent community	30
As it does	20
Be more accountable (share minutes more frequently and in more places i.e. newspaper / online)	19
Be more visible, transparent and honest	18
Work better with Local Authority including challenge	17
Work with stakeholders / partners for the community	13
Develop a strategy for the community (space management / community development)	12
Abolished	12
Whole community improvement (not just specific streets)	10
Promote village / community	9
Anything is an improvement	9
Take more responsibility from County Council	7
Limited budget (restricted)	6
Support independent businesses	6
Community projects	6
Less bureaucracy	6
Be productive and efficient (fewer larger)	5
Engage with younger people	5
Better Democratic Election	4
Use more methods of engagement (newsletters, social media, chose to be paperless etc)	4
Future proof the area	4
Do more for the town	4
Access grants	4
Stop playing politics	4
More control of local issues	4
Community events	4
Stop wasting money (sending bilingual letters – should have opt out choice)	3
Keep rates as low as possible	3
Don't know what they do	3
Pay staff appropriately	3
Well being in the community	2
Take on assets and services	2
Have more as the authority for the town	2
Challenge Welsh Government	2
Power to award local grants (regeneration / business start up)	2

Spend money wisely	2
More professional (more money / trained officers & councillors)	2
Protect and enhance the village	2
Be more proactive and inclusive when providing facilities for the community	2
Open on Saturdays or later one day a week	1
Local planning	1
No husband and wife teams	1
Open / proactive to different ideas	1
Sack them if they get it wrong	1
Spend less time thinking how to get more money	1
Stop increasing precept when senior staff get perks	1
Have a council (we're paying a precept and haven't got one)	1
Less financial control	1
Be able to purchase land / build housing	1
Spend less on councillors and more on residents	1
Have more power	1
Separate vote for mayor	1
Avoid being used by county council	1
Communities exploited by paying twice for services	1
Clarity between LA and CTC	1
Not take on what LA should provide	1

Q4: Have you been engaged by your council?

The response was more mixed on this one. Just over half of responses (52.5% or 238 responses) answered No. Almost 44% of responses (199) answered Yes. 16 people left this question blank.

Q5: If not, how would you like to see your council engage with the community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Hold surgeries / AGM / events and publicise / welcome all residents at regular local meetings (and have conversations)	87
Social media	43
Better Communication / engagement	32
Better / Active Websites	30
Meaningful Proper Consultation (Public Survey)	24
Regular Newsletters	22
Being accountable, open and transparent	14
Councillors are visible	10
Via Email	8
Door to door discussions	8
Work with community groups	8
Learning from active Councillors	7
As they do now (they are doing enough)	6
Be abolished (move functions to LA)	6
Anything because their not doing anything	5
Respond when contacted	4
Leaflet Drop	4

Debates on future threats / priorities	4
Consider language of ALL residents (meetings held in Welsh, excludes English speaking residents)	4
Posters / Flyers	3
Don't want to – they do nothing	3
Impartial / independent members	2
Stop doing what you've always done	2
Respond to local service needs	2
Use plain English	2
Do something positive	1
Support community groups	1
Whole community approach	1
Don't know who they are	1
Work with other CTCs in the area	1
Promotion of elections and encouraging people to stand / vote	1
Act as a leader	1
Unclear question	1
On public cuts	1
N/A (response not linked to engagement)	7

Q6: In your opinion, do you think your council is representative of your community?
The majority of people (almost 60% or 271 responses) did not think their council is representative of their community. However, 35% or 161 people answered Yes. 21 people left this question blank.

Q7: If your answer is no, how do you think they can represent you better?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Better communication & engagement (grass roots, listen)	77
Younger people and reflect wider backgrounds	62
Ensure elections are held	19
Don't know what they do or who they are	17
Not visible enough	14
Do more for Community	11
Remove party politics - Impartial Councillors	11
Limit term of office (max term)	8
By investing more in public services	7
Better equality requirements	5
Abolish	5
Difficult because not everyone wants to be involved	4
Need to change their approach	3
Be accessible out of working hours	3
Need clarity when decisions are made	3

Publically elected mayor	2
Stop in-house struggles	2
Be accountable – spend money wisely	2
Whole Community Approach	2
Learn from other areas	2
Don't know	2
By letting go of the past	2
Stop dual hatted councillors	2
More working groups	1
Prioritise interests of council tax payers	1
They perform few functions	1
It could exist	1
Financially reward councillors	1
Get involved with businesses	1
If they did more they'd want more money	1
Anything	1
People moving into area do not understand our heritage	1
Have access to specialist skills / advice	1
Live locally	1
Publish business plans	1
All councillors should work together	1
Qualification by residence before people can stand	1
Link with County Council more forcefully	1

Q8: Have you ever considered standing for your council?
Over half of the people who responded (57% or 259 responses) said No. 180 or almost 40% of people said Yes. 14 people left this question blank.

Q9: If your answer is no, Why not?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Time commitments / personal reasons	84
Attitudes within CTCs	56
Don't know how to get involved	21
Not interested	16
Fighting dominant culture in standing against current councillors	12
Party politics	11
Too old	10
Previously have been	8
Language Barrier (meetings in Welsh but speak English)	6
Not connected to the community enough (new comer)	5
Abolish	4
Rather serve community as part of other groups	4
No influence	4
Big job – serious responsibility	3

I am a councillor	3
Don't know what they do	3
Because it's unpaid	2
Age – Only 25 / Only 58!	2
Never an election (over 20 years)	2
Occupation does not legally allow it	2
Family member already on CTC	1
Work for Local Authority – conflict	1
Too stressful	1
Don't trust them	1

People who responded to the survey also had the chance to make any additional comments they wished to.

Additional Comments	
CTCs are good & have great potential	29
Disband	27
All need to be of same quality/capability	13
Publicise / raise awareness	10
Define relationship with LA and WG	9
Listen to public	9
More power / money (finance & trading)	8
Force fair and honest elections	7
Too many – cluster or merge	7
Change needed	6
Good that review is taking place	5
Nothing will change	5
Councillors need to represent the community	5
Councillors are / should be volunteers	4
Remove party politics	3
Capacity to build back office support	3
Merge CTCs to make a stronger local force	3
I am a former councillor	3
Don't merge	3
Review is better spent elsewhere	2
Welsh Government needs to understand what a town council is before meddling	2
Need to engage	2
Need Training	2
Monitored by independent body	2
Be more open	2
Tighter controls / guidelines	2
Better relationship with County Council	2
Encourage community asset transfer	2
Become one stop shops	2

Village / rural areas left behind	2
Wider demographic representation	2
Need full coverage	1
CTCs should do local plans	1
Each community is different	1
Review CTC role	1
Would like to be more involved	1
Involve young people more	1
Defined boundaries	1
Useful to have county councillor on community council	1
CTCs should be a consultative body	1
Link funding to demographic representation	1
Work with volunteer and community groups	1
Double Taxation	1
One size doesn't fit all	1
Stay as they are – good	1
Need to set regional picture first	1
Need ability to vote no confidence	1
Survey isn't long enough to draw conclusions	1
Make review event accessible for all – Only one NWW event	1
Age limit	1
More recognition of CTCs and Councillors	1
Some are underhand, disrespectful and rude	1
Provide better local services	1
Councillors should have political affiliation	1
Decisions are made from a distance (in WG)	1
Review should have included more diverse representation	1
Support should be available to take on board Review Recommendations	1
Disjoint between national, local and town council direction	1
Review will be used to unload costly services onto CTCs without money	1
Community Councils should respect Town Councils when they disagree on issues	1
N/A (not relevant)	17

Youth Online Survey - Summary of results

Q1: Before today, had you heard about Community or Town Councils?
The majority of responses (88) answered Yes in response to whether they had heard about their Community or Town Council before considering the survey. Whereas a small number (14) answered No. 2 people left this question blank.

Q2: If your answer is yes, do you know if you have one where you live?
Almost three quarters of responses (72% / 75 responses) answered Yes. Just over a quarter (25.9% / 27) answered No. 2 responses left this question blank.

Q3: What would you like a council to do in your area?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
More / better services (events / places for teenagers / parks / bins / games shops / football pitches / street lights / cemetery / gym / community development)	30
Discuss with community (inc younger people)	12
No response	11
Clean up area	11
Abolish / pass responsibilities to LA	9
Nothing (waste of time)	9
Better roads (fill pot holes)	7
Improve local area	6
Work with community groups / other LAs	3
As it does now / its good	3
Work for the whole of the community	3
Make area safer	2
I don't know	2
Better rubbish system (too complicated)	2
N/A / not relevant	2
Improve communication / be inclusive	2
Encourage businesses to fill empty shops	1
Put up more shelters	1
Be more accountable	1
Maintain everything	1
Explain what they do	1
Sort local parking	1
Build pride	1
More of what the LA does now	1

Q4: Before today have you been in contact or involved with your council?

Responses to this question was mixed. Almost half of responses (45) answered Yes. and almost half (54) answered No. 5 people left this question blank.

Q5: How would you like to see your council involve younger members of the community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Engage local community (events / go to schools / litter picking etc)	29
Engage with youth / youth rep on council	26
No response	17
Nothing	13
Don't know	8
Safe place to go / youth club	6
Use internet / social media	5
Anything would be good	4
Don't care	3
Abolish	3
N/A	2

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Be welcoming and accessible	2
Joint working with other LAs	1
It does	1

Q6: Have you ever considered being on a youth council or being a youth representative for your area?

Almost a third (29% of responses or 30) answered Yes in response to this question. In comparison, two thirds (66% of responses or 69) answered No to whether they had considered being on a youth council or being a youth representative. 5 people left this question blank.

Q7: If your answer is no, please tell us why?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
No response	42
Too old	14
Never thought / heard of it	11
Not interested	9
Don't know what it is	5
Too shy / lacking in confidence	3
Waste of money	3
Time consuming	3
Rather help the community	3
Don't have one in my area	3
N/A	2
Boring	2
Thankless task	1
Don't know how	1
Useless	1
Already have been youth leader	1

Q8: Anything else you think we should know?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
No response	41
No	24
Abolish	10
N/A	8
Improve the local area (sort canal out / less clothes shops / parks)	3
More communication with locals	3
Improve litter problem	2
Better relationship with LA	2
Ensure local decisions are made by local community	1
Get people to stop breaking stuff	1
CTCs are good	1

Need views from minority groups	1
Invite young people to meetings	1
Get a new clerk	1
Resources should be pooled into larger organisations	1
Delegate more to CTC	1
Publicise CTCs more	1
Councillors for larger CTC should have a wage	1
CTCs should be non-political	1

Local Authority Online Survey - Summary of Results

Q1: What should Community and Town Councils be responsible for?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Local Services / Resources (All non-statutory and strategic activities)	12
Be a voice / effective communicator for the community	4
All local matters	2
Community Well being	2
Maximising Community Assets	1
Strategic input into wider strategies	1
Town Councils have no purpose	1

Q2: Are there any barriers to the success of Community and Town Councils? What might enable them to achieve their aims?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Budget / Finance	7
Lack of community engagement including with young people (closed sessions)	5
No full time staff / resources	5
Clarity on Aims/roles/responsibilities	3
Better training for councillors in conducting meetings / communication / negotiation skills / using IT (including social media) and legal	3
Need to be larger to take on services	2
No community interest	2
Attitude of councillors	2
Lack of information on CTC activities	1
Update Local Government Act	1
Lack of public awareness	1
Lack of councillors	1
Inability to make local decisions	1
Support mechanism for Clerks	1
Lack of collaborative approach to partners	1
Lack of transparency (minutes late being published etc)	1

Q3: Do the current governance arrangements for Community and Town Councils work? How might they be improved?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
No / Not sure	4
Current arrangements remote and complex (do not understand)	4
Communication / visibility poor	2
Need for qualified clerks	2
Elected mayor / chair with executive powers	2
Better relationship with the Local Authority	2
Update Local Government Act	1
Lack of knowledge in smaller CTCs	1
Replace some CTCs with elected mayors for the area	1
CTC needs to be listened to by the Government	1
Should operate similar to county councils	1
Poor relationships with local organisations	1
Expert advice needed at a minimum level agreement to ensure consistency across sector	1
Finance should be replaced with a form of direct payment (general rates)	1
Current regime matches size / responsibility. If this changes this should be reviewed.	1

Q4: How should Community and Town Councils ensure they best represent their local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Numbers
Use all avenues of engagement (surveys / social media / website / online presence / Councillor surgeries)	8
Share information with the community (legal duty)	6
Be open / have public meetings (with times / locations considered)	6
Listen / consult	5
Local people as the elected representative (not represent political party)	3
Develop plans	1
Mandatory elections	1
Work with local groups	1
Approachable	1
Represent a political party	1
Be separate from Local Authority	1
Share learning between Local Authorities and CTCs on approaches to elections	1
Get rid and start again	1

Q5: Is it useful to have "twin hatted" councillors who sit on both the Unitary Authority and the Community and Town council? How might these arrangements be improved?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Yes	7

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Builds relationships / trust	4
No – conflict of interest	4
Works well	2
Could be more formalised to avoid conflicts of interest	1
If reducing number of councillors at CTC level then not best	1

Q6: What relationship do you have with Community and Town Councils in your area, and how is (or could) this relationship be best managed?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
N/A / Response not relevant	7
No relationship	3
Local council forum	3
Only through one person	2
Mostly online and meetings where necessary	2
Room for improvement	1
Charter	1
Improved by keeping website up to date	1

Q7: What role do you envisage for Community and Town Councils in your area in terms of delivery of services or management of assets, in communities?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Responsibility for managing services / assets inc economic renewal (if larger or work together)	11
CTC facilitate services	2
Direct control of budget	1
Accountability to County Council and Community	1
Work with County Council to deliver local services	1
Work with local groups	1
Hard to say	1

Q8: Do community councils need to be a certain size to have the capacity and capability to play this role?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Yes	6
No	3
Should be linked to the size of their responsibilities	2
Possibly – number of councillors should also be considered	2
Nothing should be contracted out	1
Should be natural communities	1
Should address gaps	1
Should take into account local geography	1
Made up of between 5-8 wards and populations of between 8 and 15 thousand	1
But if too big can be more bureaucratic.	1
Size doesn't matter	1
Don't know	1

Community and Town Council Sector Online Survey - Summary of Results

Q1: What should Community and Town Councils be responsible for?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Local community issues or services	120
Ensuring local views are represented	46
Well being and Culture	29
Act as partner with Unitary Authority / Community Groups / Third Sector / Police	29
Influence over planning decisions / challenge and LDP	22
As little as possible / nothing / scrapped	18
Village / community planning	16
Local events / Tourism & Leisure	13
Community and Business regeneration	11
No additional responsibilities/non-vital services (no capacity)	10
As they do	8
Bringing Local Authority to account for service failure	7
Statutory responsibilities / Expanded to cover other local services	7
Depends on level of expenditure to deliver services. Should not largely increase precept without cost reduction in other charges (i.e. Council Tax)	6
Not an easy answer with such variation	6
All non-stat services	6
Enhancing the quality of life for residents	5
Setting an adequate precept	4
Clear definition needed	4
Management of relevant assets to scale and size of community (clustering and arms length body to deliver services if where appropriate)	4
Not taking over county services	4
General repairs & maintenance	3
Support and assist with fundraising for infrastructure projects.	3
Appropriate financial management and deliver value for money	3
With clear guidelines to avoid allegations of double taxation	3
Keeping public areas safe	3
Facilities beyond capability of Local Authorities	2
Be the hub of the community	2
Devolve car parks and revenues	2
Work across boundaries	2
Ensuring fairness in the community	1
Not responsible for labour intensive things (fly-tipping, bins)	1
Powers to enact by laws	1
Address operating issues	1
Interpret and help implement decisions made at higher levels	1
Competent assessment of CTCs before take on services	1
Open and transparent discussion with Local Authority	1
Should not include matters shared with other communities	1
Focus on deprived communities to redress the balance with more affluent areas of the community	1
PSB link	1

Access grants and funding	1
Coproduction	1
Town and neighbouring Community and Town Councils should collaborate for the wellbeing of the area and protocol for this should be established	1

Q2: How should they operate?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Democratic election	30
Fully open and transparent	31
Local engagement	32
Better relationship with County Council (dialogue & terms of reference)	29
Publicise meetings (public allowed to speak) and meet more regularly (monthly)	18
Professional way (including no home clerks)	17
Clustering (regionally but with option to be independent)	16
Representing community diversity	16
Paid Staff / Full time staff / Training for staff (development officers & councillors)	14
Collaboratively with other services	13
Disband	13
As they do now	12
Online presence (social media groups / webchat / surveys)	11
Independent Councillors (no party affiliation)	11
Autonomously (with budget)	7
Keep small	6
Review / have decision making powers	5
Effectively / less bureaucracy	5
Councillors understanding role	5
Strong Governance	4
Experienced clerks advising councils (more formalised role)	4
Increase precepts	4
Expert support	4
Part funded from Welsh Government	4
LA Assistance with finance and processing finance	3
Reduce number of councillors	3
Within WG guidelines of volunteering	3
Consistently across Wales or not at all	3
Amalgamated (reduced by half / based on population of 10,000 or more)	3
Use existing powers and develop more powers	3
Financial Plans	3
All operate in the same way	3
Compliant with Code of Conduct	3
Mandatory training that doesn't impact on budget	3
Appropriate expenses	3
Develop community plans	3

Dependent on number of services they manage	2
Being involved in local planning	2
Change rules around Councillors being County Councillors	2
More support for smaller councils / less advantaged councillors (technology)	2
As Legally Stipulated	2
Councillors act without payment	2
Unclear question	2
Share learning	2
More Money	2
Work within the Well-being of Future Generations Framework	2
More support / help / less demand on clerks	2
Need to be careful of expectation	1
Mix of elected and non-elected members (same as school bodies)	1
Investors in people approach	1
As a community hub	1
Committee Style Council	1
One Voice network is useful to learn and apply best practice	1
New Council start up grant	1
Local Democracy marketing programme	1
Increase central funding through One Voice Wales	1
Introduce an age limit for Councillors	1
Act as a Business Board	1
Should not hoard / waste money	1
UK – Sustainable Development Principle	1
Area managers for devolved assets	1
Councillors should set policy / monitor delivery but not be involved in day-to-day management	1
Assets or cluster of assets run by arms length trusts	1
Nothing should stifle agility to respond and seize opportunities	1
Citizen's panel with communities.	1
GPoC for all could help with transparency	1
Flexible and proactive with revised governance	1
Shared resources, services and equipment	1
Unable to answer in current circumstances	1
Elected chair and vice chair	1
Free of party politics	1
Councillors should get paid	1

Q3: What's standing in their way to deliver for the local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Finance	73
Lack of relationship with County Council	67
Lack of paid staff / time	24

Qualified Councillors / Clerks	22
Red Tape	19
Lack of communication with the Community	15
Resources	15
Age barrier of councillors	12
Attitudes of councillors	12
Lack of understanding of role / sector	11
The Government (inc UK)	10
Lack of influence on a variety of decisions	10
Party Politics	10
Clarity of purpose / responsibility	10
Lack of Strategic Planning and budget planning	9
Lack of expert advice	9
Lack of knowledge	9
Appetite	9
Lack of participation in sector from community members	8
Reluctance to raise precept	8
Lack of openness / transparency	8
Lack of consistency – relationship with Local Authorities across Wales	8
Attitudes of other service providers (i.e. businesses)	6
Effective Communication	6
Clarity on legal powers (between Local Authorities & Community and Town Councils)	6
Democratic Mandate	6
Allegations of double taxation if take on services / assets from unitary authorities	6
Nothing	5
Many Community and Town Councils are too small	5
No payments for councillors	5
Lack of local training	4
Lack of willingness to work together	4
No other sources of income	4
Need to be main partner in the community	4
High workloads putting off attracting councillors	4
Conflicts of interest for councillors	3
Restrictions with powers (GPoC / Power of Well Being / Section 137)	3
Poor communications network across Wales	3
Too many councillors	2
Don't want to merge / lose individuality	2
Disband	2
Job description for councillors	2
Old fashioned practices	2
Whole community accessing Community and Town Councils services but not paying towards precept	2

No mechanism For scrutiny	2
Stop county councillors being community councillors	2
Lack of consistent reliable broadband	2
Too much untargeted contact (30 consultations to sift a month)	2
Sustainability	1
Self Belief	1
Excessive Audits of small councils	1
Every Community Area should have a council	1
Transfer of funding when services are transferred	1
Not enough support from One Voice Wales	1
Working across boundaries	1
Language Barrier	1
Lack of national coverage	1
Public Expectations	1
Too many Community and Town Councils	1
Political education	1

Q4: How do councils ensure they best represent their local community?

Reoccurring Responses	Number
Consult local community	99
Engage through other avenues (Online presence, local shops, forum, Surveys, Councillor surgeries	58
Be more transparent	29
Democratic elections	24
Work with other service providers (inc Local Authority)	22
Councillors reflecting local community (age range, interests, occupations etc)	21
Active Councillors in communities	13
Produce a community action plan	13
They don't	11
Encourage people to become a councillor or get involved	11
Remove requirement to represent a political party	6
Partnership with community	6
Share info about what Community and Town Council does and decisions they make	4
Maintain small councils	4
Being proactive / involved in regeneration	4
Mandatory training for councillors	3
Honest	2
Recognise work councillors do and explore payment	2
Share good practice	2
Remove confusion of different councillors	2
Mandatory training for councillors	2
Unclear question	2

Fewer Councillors	2
Dual hatted-ness both hinders and helps	2
Lower voting age to 16	2
Proportionality on committees	1
Acceptance that councillors are integral part of local democracy	1
Improve representation with nominations from local schools / businesses	1
By having tangible responsibilities	1
Abolish them	1
Adopt a participatory model	1
Geographic coverage	1
Time limit councillor service	1
Not rely on Community Councillors	1
Up to each Community and Town Council	1
Real Community Boundaries	1

Overview of Feedback from National 'Pop-In' Sessions held in May 2018

Public Feedback Forms

Q1 - Are you aware of a Community or Town Council in your area?		
YES	519	93.51%
NO	36	6.49%

Q2 - Has your Council engaged with you before today?		
YES	367	66.13%
NO	188	33.87%

Q3 - If not, how would you like your council to engage with the community?	
Website	5
Newsletter	16
Email	15
Social Media	23
Public Notice Board	6
Be more visible / personal presence / door to door / canvas / visit business / visit local schools, youth groups / places of worship	24
Engage with the community / public meetings / regular updates / listen to the public / attend community events / surgeries / focus groups	70
Town Crier	1
Letter drops / leaflets	5
Unsure	3
Any engagement would be helpful	4
Local free press	2
Other	30
No answer	351

Q4 - In your opinion, do you think your council is representative of your community?	
Yes	327
No	140
Did not answer	65
Don't Know	16
Not Bad	4
Other	3

If your answer is no, How do you think they can represent you better?	
Did not answer	406
Other	50
More diversity (answers include gender balance, culturally, minorities, local business reps, non political, demographic)	40
Younger Representatives	25
Do not disappear after elections	5
Less of a closed shop	3
More representative of the community	12
Good mix	10
Shake up / change needed	4

Q5 - Have you ever considered standing for your council? If your answer is no, Why not?	
Yes	101
No	433
No Answer	21
Time / too busy / commitments	132
To old	19
Too political / not interested in Politics	13
New to the area	46
Other	17

Q6 - What would you like to see your council do?	
Local Services & maintenance	335
Engage / be visible /involvement in the community / events / with all groups / be more accessible	143
No answer	114
Facilities for children and younger members of the community	83
Be more open / accountability / transparency	26
Pool services / merge / work with others	15
Continue as they are	22
More powers	15
Represent the community	21
Regular public meetings / updates	24
Be proactive / have a vision	11
Environmental	10
Other (Primary council responsibility)	197

Youth Feedback Forms

The total number of youth feedback forms returned was 50. When analysing the responses, it is clear that 12% of respondents are older than traditional 'youth' age limits when completing the youth feedback form.

Q1 - Before today, had you heard about Community and Town Councils		
Yes	42	84%
No	5	10%
No answer	3	6%

Q2 - Do you know if you have one where you live?		
Yes	36	72%
No	9	18%
No answer	5	10%

Q3 - Do you know what your Community and Town Council does?		
Yes	29	58%
No	15	30%
No answer	6	12%

Q4 - What would you like a council to do in your area?	
Provided suggestions	34
No answer	14
Don't know	2

The word cloud below shows verbatim answers to question 4.

| Q5 - Before today have you been in contact or involved with your council?		
Yes	19	38%
No	26	52%
No answer	5	10%

Q6 - How would you like to see your council involve younger members of the community? The word cloud below shows verbatim answers.
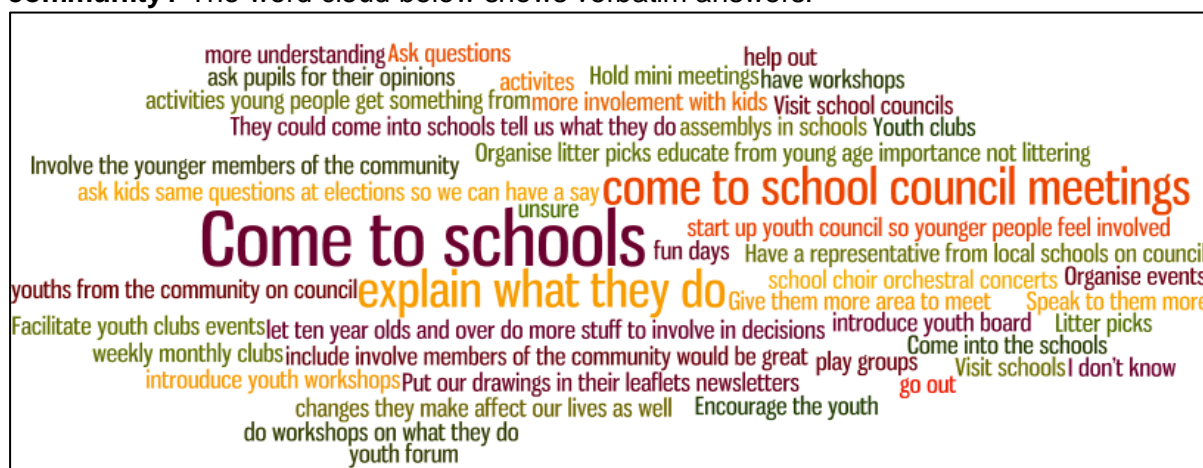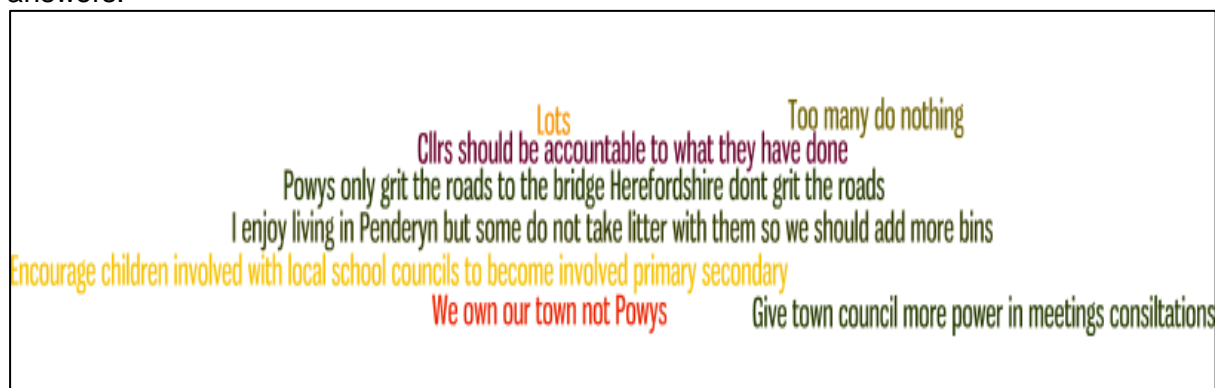

Q7 - Have you ever considered being on a youth council or being a youth representative for your area?

Yes	5	10%
No	33	66%
No Answer	6	12%
Not answered by a youth	6	12%

If No, please tell us why? The below word cloud shows verbatim answers.
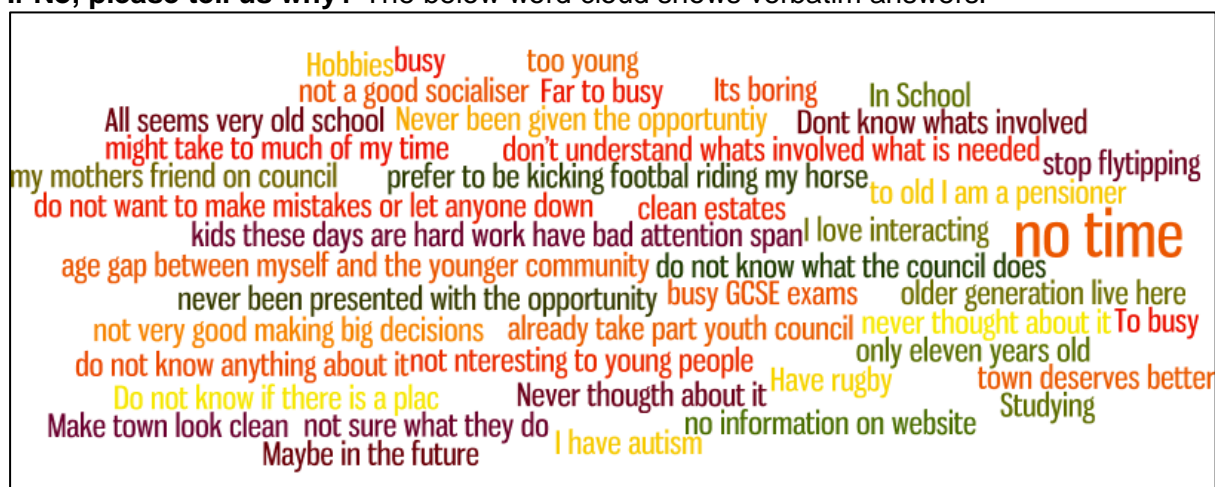
Q9 - Anything else you think we should know? The word cloud below shows verbatim answers.

Acknowledgements

We, as members of the Independent Review Panel, would like to thank all of the individuals, groups and organisations who supported the Review and engaged in some way. We are particularly grateful to those who took the time to provide us with evidence and attend the many events across Wales. Thank you to those who supported people to complete the surveys either as individuals or in groups, and to those organisations and groups who supported people to have their say as part of events & workshops or meetings.

Thanks are also due to all those who promoted the online surveys or events & workshops on their websites, newsletters or social media accounts. The number of the responses received, is testament to your support. We could not have achieved a truly evidence based review without your help.