

Housing Information Group: minutes of meeting

Thursday 22 June 2023 – 10:00-12:30

Attendees			
Scott	Armstrong	SA	Welsh Government
David	Blair	DB	Welsh Government
Stephen	Chamberlain	SC	Welsh Government
Cerys	Clark	CC	CIH Cymru
Paul	Conway	PC	Trivallis
Rhian	Davies	RD	Welsh Government
Rachel	Dolman	RD	Welsh Government
Ciaran	Downey	CD	Welsh Government
Janine	Edwards	JE	Denbighshire County Council
Carol	Evans	CE	Conwy Council
Alun	Evans	AE	Citizens Advice
Tim	Evans	TE	Welsh Government
Jonathan	Fudge	JF	Welsh Government
Silja	Guggisberg	SG	Office for National Statistics
Sarah	Hosken-Jones	SHJ	Housemark
Darren	Hatton	DH	Welsh Government
Chele	Howard	CH	Neath Port Talbot Council
Adam	Jurd	AJ	Welsh Government
Jim	McKirdle	JM	Welsh Local Government Association
Matt	Miller	MM	Carmarthenshire County Council
Anthony	Newby	AN	Welsh Government
Llio	Owen	LO	Welsh Government
Mike	Potts	MP	Newport Council
Joanna	Rees	JR	Barcud
Avril	Roberts	AR	CLA Cymru
Manon	Roberts	MR	Wales NHS
Paul	Robinson	PR	Welsh Government
David	Rowlands	DR	Tai Pawb
Bob	Smith	BS	Cardiff University
Steffan	Smith	SS	Welsh Government
Elizabeth	Taylor	ET	TPAS - Tenant Engagement
Bethany	Turner	BT	CLA Cymru
Gowan	Watkins	GW	Welsh Government
Tony	Wilkins	TW	Office for National Statistics

Megan	Williams	MW	Welsh Government
Lowri	Wyn Morton	LWM	Gwynedd Council
Presenters			
Gareth	Brand	GB	Welsh Government
Ashley	Caddick	AC	Welsh Revenue Authority
Ieuan	Davies	ID	Welsh Government
Heledd	Fflur Jones	HFJ	Cyngor Gwynedd
Holly	Flynn	HF	Welsh Government
Dave	Jones	DJ	Welsh Revenue Authority
Luned	Jones	LJ	Welsh Government
Craig	McLeod	CM	Welsh Government
Phil	Nelson	PN	Welsh Government
Sarah	Rhodes	SR	Welsh Government (Chair)
Minute takers			
Florence	Milne	FM	Welsh Government
Sam	Voyce	SV	Welsh Government
Apologies			
Helen	Bevan-Jones	HBJ	Bron Afon
Alun	Evans	AE	Citizens Advice
Mark	Harris	MH	Home Builders Federation Ltd
Chantal	Jordan	CJ	Carmarthenshire County Council
Sarah	Scotcher	SS	Community Housing Cymru Group
Kirsty	Wells	KW	Housemark
Emma	Williams	EW	Welsh Government
Louise	Woodfine	LW	NHS Wales

1	Welcome and Introduction	Sarah Rhodes, Welsh Government
<p>SR welcomed everyone and introduced the agenda. SR has taken over from Amelia John as Deputy Director of Housing Policy.</p> <p>Simultaneous translation was provided.</p> <p>Presentations will be shared following the meeting.</p>		
2	Second Homes – Policy Context and Importance of Evidence	David Blair, Welsh Government
<p>DB gave a presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-operation Agreement - The work the team are doing including changes to local taxation on second homes, the Welsh language communities Housing Plan and Empty Homes grants. - The pilot in Dwyfor where a number of interventions are being trialled. 		

3	Second Homes – what does the evidence tell us?	Luned Jones, Craig McLeod, Holly Flynn, Dave Jones, Ashley Caddick
<p>LJ gave a presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The WG article on second homes published on 20 June, the same day as the ONS output from Census 2021 around second homes. - Article provides information on sources of data on second homes. It explains there is no standard definition of a second home and different sources used different definitions. <p>CM gave a presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The definition of second homes used in the census and the questions asked in the census as well as the results from the census. - These results included: 38 wards had a rate of over 50 holiday homes per 1,000 dwellings and around 2/3 of those that used holiday homes in Pembrokeshire were from Wales, mainly south Wales. - Further results can be found on the slides. <p>Discussion:</p> <p>GW: do we know the number of households that use holiday homes. LJ: Published Census 2021 data includes the number of holiday homes, and the number of individuals using holiday homes (no data on the number of households using holiday homes are published).</p> <p>HF gave a presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council tax data: what data is available and some key statistics. - Data is received in two forms: snapshots of property level from LA Revenue and Benefit systems as well as annual council tax dwelling returns. <p>MM: In the past, people have tried to avoid paying council tax by deciding what they would declare to council tax authority and choosing the one which means they pay the least tax. What is stopping people doing this? GB: Unsure of exact answer – can take away and find out from colleagues. SS: CH has previous experience working on this area and there are bank checks at local level and other evidence required to try to prevent this.</p> <p>GW: Why is there no second homes data for Pembrokeshire? GB: They are able to provide data at the local authority level, but we are lacking more granular geographical data at the moment.</p> <p>DJ and AC gave a presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Land Transaction Tax (LTT) data that is published. - Higher rates are used for second homes and buy to lets. Rates vary largely due to sizes of local authorities. Charts can be found on the slides. - A new question has been added to the Tax return asking about the intent behind higher rate transactions, which means, better data on second homes purchases might be available in the future. <p>MM: Is it possible to cross reference LTT data with Rent Smart Wales data?</p>		

	<p>AC: Rent Smart Wales data is currently used for operational reasons within the WRA, but this is largely on individual case basis. We are now working to identify how we can use the Rent Smart Wales data as part of our statistics publications.</p> <p>RD: one of the limitations of the Rent Smart Wales data is that people don't always de-register when they no longer have a buy to let, which can lead to multiple people being registered to the same property at the same time.</p> <p>GB gave a presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The non-domestic rates data that is available (LA finance returns, property level local authority billing data and property level VOA ratings data) - The new criteria for a self-catering holiday lets - Non-domestic rates policy context <p>GW: How was the number of nights let and available to be eligible for NDRs established? Does it have any allowances for bad weather shortening the usual holiday season etc?</p> <p>GB: No, there are no specific allowances made within the new criteria – there was a public consultation about the changes to criteria.</p> <p>PN gave a presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The short term let data that is available and some key statistics from the data. - PN also covered some of the challenges with using the data. - Stats.housing@gov.wales <p>LJ: Is it possible to combine NDR and council tax data?</p> <p>GB: It would be great if we could however, when people move between lists, they are given a new URN making it hard to match the data. We are working on it to bring it in in the future.</p>	
4	Evaluation plans for Dwyfor second homes and affordability pilot	Ieuan Davies, Welsh Government
	<p>ID gave a presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The evaluation into the implementation of the Second Homes and Affordability pilot project. The primary aim is to assess the effectiveness of piloted activities to achieve the respective aims. - The contract goes through to December 2026 where there will be a final report published. In the meantime, there will be a baseline report in Autumn 2024 and process evaluation Autumn 2025. Continuous shared learning will be done throughout. - There will be a three-stage study: Phase 1: Data mapping, Phase 2: Process evaluation, Phase 3: Impact evaluation. 	
5	Second homes and holiday homes: a local authority perspective	Heledd Fflur Jones, Cyngor Gwynedd
	HFJ gave a presentation covering:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An overview of the work done by the local authority in terms of Article 4. - How evidence was gathered and key changes in second homes between 2018 and 2022 including statistics on the increase in holiday homes over the last four years. - Difficulties with the data due to inconsistencies from different data sources. 	
6	Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE) update	Bob Smith, Cardiff University
	<p>BS gave update on CaCHE.</p> <p>We are now into the second phase of our work which began last November and will run for the next five years. We have a smaller budget and a smaller number of universities involved. We have revised the four broad themes for the next four years which have been set out in the paper. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing and the Economy - Housing inequalities - Housing and Place - Housing and the Environment <p>In the paper there are a number of reports that have been published since our last meeting. Around ten reports which can all be found on the website.</p> <p>Last autumn we undertook a small piece of work for Welsh Government on rent control. That paper has now been published on the Welsh Government website.</p>	
7	AOB	
	<p>TW (ONS): there is an upcoming public consultation around population and migration statistics. It will run from 29 June to the 26 October. There will be hybrid launch events in London and Cardiff (4th and 6th July respectively).</p> <p>Future agenda item: if there are particular areas you think would be helpful you can send ideas through to KASevents.</p> <p>The next meeting will be 28 September 2023. We plan to continue to hold these meetings virtually.</p>	Secretariat to circulate more information around the ONS consultation to the group.

Housing Information Group 22 June 2023 Summary of Action Points		
1	Secretariat to circulate more information around the public consultation around population and migration statistics.to the group.	