



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**Welsh Government response to the report of the Commission for  
Welsh-speaking Communities: *Empowering communities,  
strengthening the Welsh language.***

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## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. General Principles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Census 2021</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. Areas of higher density linguistic significance</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5. The Economy</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6. Welsh Language Workplaces</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>7. Community Development</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>8. Housing</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>9. Town and Country Planning</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>10. Equality, diversity and inclusion</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>11. Welsh-medium education</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>12. Community-based language planning</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Annex 1: List of recommendations</b>	<b>39</b>

# 1. Introduction

The *Second Homes: Developing New Policies in Wales* report published by Dr Simon Brooks in 2021 demonstrated that second homes are having a negative impact on our Welsh-speaking communities. However, the effects of economic restructuring due to changes in the political landscape, a global pandemic and financial pressures on the public sector posed further challenges to these communities. The report concluded that our Welsh-speaking communities will face ongoing socio-linguistic challenges that will threaten the viability of the Welsh language as a living community language. The report recommended establishing an independent commission to explore these challenges and to make policy recommendations with the aim of strengthening Welsh-speaking communities.

The Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities was therefore established by the Welsh Government to look at the challenges facing the Welsh language in its traditional heartlands. The Commission had four key objectives:

- i. undertake an in-depth analysis of Census 2021 results
- ii. identify areas of linguistic sensitivity where policy intervention may be required to support the language
- iii. identify possible policy interventions to support and strengthen the Welsh language as a community language
- iv. making policy recommendations (by means of a report) in relation to strengthening Welsh as a community language in areas of linguistic sensitivity.

The Commission's '***Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language***' report concludes two years of detailed work involving public engagement, extensive policy and linguistic analysis. The Commission focussed on the following key policy areas: the economy, workplaces, community development, housing, town and country planning, equality, diversity and inclusion, Welsh-medium education and community-based language planning.

The [\*Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language\*](#) report contains a total of 57 recommendations. We have therefore carefully considered the report and its recommendations and have provided our response to those recommendations within this document. We have addressed the recommendations that specifically fall within the Welsh Government's remit. However, some recommendations are to be considered and addressed by local authorities, health boards, and other relevant bodies.

We will also be publishing a separate response at a later date to the standalone report on [Town and Country Planning](#), published by the Commission in February 2025. Our response will address the 14 recommendations made by the Commission.

Finally, we wish to thank Dr Simon Brooks, the Chair of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, and members of the Commission, for their

detailed work, dedication and expertise whilst gathering evidence and preparing the report.

We also wish to thank Prosiect BRO for the detailed Compendium included in the report and to the many who provided evidence to support the work of the Commission. The report has provided valuable insights, and the commitment and effort in its preparation have been immensely and deeply appreciated.

We warmly welcomed the [Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language](#) report when it was published during the National Eisteddfod at Rhondda Cynon Taf during August 2024.

This document represents the Welsh Government's response to the recommendations made in the Commission's report. While this document includes our preliminary response, we acknowledge that further work in various policy areas is necessary. We are committed to continuing our efforts in working collaboratively to improve and develop policies that will support the Welsh language and help sustain Welsh as a community language.

For ease, we have responded to the report in the same way as the Commission has formatted their report. We begin our response with a summary of the chapter and the main findings, we provide our response and then set out what we are doing and plan to do in the future. The full list of the Commission's recommendations is at Annex 1.

## 2. General principles

### Summary of the General principles chapter:

The Commission emphasises the pivotal role of language in shaping and sustaining communities. Specifically, it examines the social dynamics surrounding the Welsh language, highlighting its significance as a national language and the challenges it encounters within various communities across Wales. The Commission stresses the necessity for effective public policy to promote the use and acquisition of Welsh, while addressing issues of social justice and community sustainability. The primary areas of discussion are as follows:

**Language as a Social Phenomenon:** The Welsh language serves as a medium for communication across diverse social contexts, influenced by factors such as geography, socio-economic status, and age. The Commission views Welsh as a national language, that belongs to everyone, irrespective of their community context. There has been a historical shift from Welsh to English over many decades, particularly since the 1940s, leading to a decline in Welsh as a community language. The Commission believes that if current trends continue, Welsh could potentially disappear as a widely used community language.

**Community Sustainability and Social Justice:** The report emphasises the importance of sustaining Welsh-speaking communities to maintain and support language acquisition and use. Promoting effective language acquisition and use, social justice, and intensifying consideration of the Welsh language within public policy are crucial to stabilise and strengthen Welsh as a community language. Additionally, there is a desire to promote Welsh language acquisition more effectively within the education system.

**Rights of Welsh Speakers:** The Commission advocates for universal language rights for Welsh speakers across Wales and proposes the establishment of areas of higher density linguistic significance to tailor public policy in response to language shifts towards English. It argues that strengthening Welsh-speaking communities will positively impact Welsh language use in all parts of Wales, without undermining the rights of speakers elsewhere. The focus is on socio-economic and socio-linguistic policies that influence the everyday use of Welsh, while maintaining a balance with broader pan Wales policies.

**Impact of Climate Crisis:** The Commission discusses the potential repercussions of the climate crisis, not only on the environment but also on social and cultural identities, particularly minority languages like Welsh. This could lead to potential migration, cultural loss, and loss of linguistic diversity. Despite challenges, the Commission believes there are opportunities for developing sustainable practices and renewable energy sources in west Wales that can aid community and language preservation efforts.

**Language Awareness Initiatives:** To reverse the decline of Welsh, the Commission stresses the need for increased language awareness across various demographics. It emphasises the need for widespread language

awareness, understanding the history and significance of Welsh, and recognising the factors that led to the language shift towards English. The report advocates for the development of language awareness programmes tailored to various audiences, highlighting the importance of stable bilingualism and navigating bilingual social situations. Furthermore, it suggests that Wales could benefit from international exchanges of knowledge on language preservation efforts, particularly in the context of the UK's departure from the European Union.

**Future Generations and Sustainability:** The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates public bodies to enhance the well-being of Wales. It establishes seven well-being goals, including promoting a vibrant culture and the Welsh language, and outlines five key actions for public bodies to follow. These actions emphasise the importance of supporting Welsh-speaking communities today to ensure the language's sustainability for future generations. The recommendations provided not only address current needs but also contribute to long term language preservation.

**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion:** The Commission discusses the diversity within the group of Welsh speakers, highlighting the importance of recognising and respecting various identities beyond linguistic ones. The report notes that some groups within this community have faced discrimination, emphasising the need for language planning to address these ongoing disadvantages and ensure that all speakers are respected and able to express their identity.

**Addressing Social Class Disparities:** The report highlights the correlation between language and social class, noting that Welsh is losing ground among less privileged socio-economic groups. The Commission stresses the need for language planning to address these social class disparities and to be more inclusive of groups with less economic and cultural capital, particularly in urban Welsh-speaking areas.

## **Welsh Government response:**

The Welsh Government agrees that the Welsh language belongs to everyone in Wales, wherever they live. We are committed to strengthening the Welsh language in every part of Wales as well as increasing awareness of the language within Wales as well as internationally.

The *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers Welsh language* strategy affirms our commitment to the Welsh language as a community language. The Commission for Welsh-speaking communities was established specifically to better understand the challenges the language faces as a community language. The Commission's findings and recommendations strengthens our understanding of what must be achieved in order to safeguard Welsh as a community language.

To help us to understand the language shift occurring within our Welsh-speaking communities, we provides funding for Prosiect BRO, which is a comprehensive socio-linguistic research project led by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies), the University of the Highlands and Islands (Language Sciences



Institute) and Oxford University (Jesus College). We will respond to the conclusions of Prosiect BRO when the final report is published in 2026.

### **3. Census 2021**

#### **Summary of the Census 2021 chapter:**

As part of its terms of reference, the Commission was asked to undertake an analysis of the Census 2021 results in order to understand the current position of the Welsh language. The Commission published a compendium of demographic and linguistic statistics and key trends based on the Census 2021 within the Commission's report. The Compendium was produced through Prosiect BRO, a socio-linguistic research project.

The data shows that Gwynedd and Ynys Môn are the local authorities with the highest percentages of Welsh speakers in Wales. In Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, over 40% of residents are able to speak Welsh in over half of the LSOAs (Lower layer Super Output Areas). The data also shows that Welsh language transmission rates are amongst the highest in some of these areas in general.

The local authority with the next highest proportion of LSOAs where 40% or more residents are able to speak Welsh is Conwy. There are also LSOAs within Pembrokeshire, Denbighshire, Powys and Neath Port Talbot where over 40% can speak Welsh.

Between 2001 and 2021, Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire have seen the percentage of Welsh speakers decline. However, the data show the percentage of Welsh speakers aged 3-15 is consistently higher than the equivalent percentage of the population.

Finally, the Commission examined the perception in public discourse in Wales that Welsh speakers as a group are relatively privileged. They concluded however, that where the Welsh language is strongest, this does not appear to be the case. Census 2021 data shows that Welsh speakers are underrepresented in advance managerial, administrative, and professional occupations compared to other socio-economic categories in Ynys Môn and Gwynedd. This disadvantage is not absolute however, and the Commission also highlighted that even though Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire face some structural economic disadvantage, the percentage of Welsh speakers within the NS-SEC categories L14.1 and L14.2 (never worked and long-term unemployed) is significantly lower than the percentage of Welsh speakers in other categories. The data and the Commission suggest therefore, that the Welsh speaking group is, to some extent, diverging along lines of social class.

#### **Welsh Government response:**

Census 2021 was held during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, on 21/03/2021. This followed lockdowns, distance learning for children and many people working from home.

We do not know how the pandemic may have affected people's ability in Welsh (or people's perception of Welsh language ability), particularly in areas

with fewer Welsh speakers, or on parental or guardian perception of the Welsh skills of children and young people in those areas.

We consider the census to be the primary source for measuring the number of Welsh speakers in Wales. However, we also draw on a range of other data sources that provide valuable and more frequent insights into Welsh language use and proficiency.

These include surveys such as the National Survey for Wales and the Annual Population Survey, which regularly report on the population's Welsh language skills, usage frequency, and fluency. Education-focused administrative data from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) and the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) offer annual insights into the Welsh language abilities of pupils and school staff, as well as the extent to which Welsh is used or taught in schools. In addition, the Welsh Language Use Survey provides richer contextual information on how and where Welsh is spoken.

While these sources are not directly comparable with the census due to methodological differences, they are essential for monitoring trends and supporting language policy between census years.

## **What are we doing?**

- The Welsh Government is supporting Prosiect BRO in collaboration with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, the University of Highlands and Islands and Christ College Oxford. This innovative socio-linguistic research project will give us the opportunity to better understand at a community level, the nature of the language shift taking place in Wales. It will give us an understanding to address the challenges facing our communities.
- Prosiect BRO will add value to the Government's wider work as the analyses will contribute to the formulation of more effective policy interventions to protect and increase the use of the Welsh language within communities.
- Welsh Government statisticians are working in collaboration with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to explore how we can better understand the differences in estimates of the number of Welsh speakers across various surveys and data sources.
- As part of this [joint work plan](#), we have published a [statistical article](#) examining discrepancies between the census and the Labour Force Survey, on which the Annual Population Survey is based, in estimating the number of Welsh speakers.
- We will continue to work closely with the ONS, not only to identify how these data sources differ, but also to explore the underlying reasons for those differences. This ongoing work will play a vital role in shaping the future of statistics on the Welsh language.

## **4. Areas of higher density linguistic significance**

### **Summary of the Areas of higher density linguistic significance chapter:**

In their chapter on areas of higher density linguistic significance [Recommendation 2–8], the Commission recognises that the density of Welsh speakers is vitally important for language use at a community level. Despite the increased recognition of Welsh nationally, there has been a substantial decline in the percentage of Welsh speakers in traditional Welsh-speaking communities. The Commission states that this presents a risk to the future of Welsh as a community language, and consequently as a national language too.

The Commission believes that making variations to policy in order to address the particular needs of high-density Welsh-speaking communities will help to ensure their future sustainability. These policy areas include, economic development, community development, housing, town and country planning, and education. The Commission notes that not all public policies will need to be varied – policies regarding the status of the Welsh language and the rights of Welsh speakers, should be applied on an all-Wales level.

To enable and facilitate policy variation, the Commission believes that communities with a high, or relatively high, density of Welsh speakers should be designated as ‘areas of higher density linguistic significance’ [Recommendation 2]. This designation should exist alongside a firm commitment by the Welsh Government to revitalise the Welsh language across the whole of Wales.

A core element of creating areas of higher density linguistic significance would be to allow greater consideration of Welsh as a community language within policy frameworks, ensuring that policy changes respond to social and linguistic needs, and also help to empower communities to reverse language shift.

The Commission suggests that the process of designating an area of higher density linguistic significance should be undertaken after a thorough consideration of the situation of the Welsh language within a local area. The Commission states [Recommendation 5] that it should be possible to make a designation using one of two methods:

- i. The Welsh Government to set a statistical threshold based on Census 2021 data. Based on the evidence available, the Commission argued that there should be a presumption in favour of designating this threshold as 40% [Recommendation 6]. The Commission also stated that communities should not be prevented from being designated as areas of higher density linguistic significance if they fall a few percentage points below this threshold.
- ii. Local authorities should have the discretion to designate areas of higher density linguistic significance. This would ensure an important

element of local accountability in language policy and provide an opportunity to consider statistical sources other than the census, local knowledge, as well as a community's desire to seek designation. It may be appropriate to use local discretion to designate areas that, although below the threshold themselves, are surrounded by areas of higher density linguistic significance.

The Commission recommends that the framework of designation of areas of higher density linguistic significance should be established by means of new primary legislation [Recommendation 7].

### **Welsh Government response:**

As the report of the Commission states, the Welsh language belongs to every community and local authority across Wales. Each area is on its own linguistic journey, and the focus in the report on the higher density areas does not mean that the language is not significant and important across the whole of Wales. The second phase of the Commission's work will focus on Welsh as a community language in the remainder of Wales and beyond.

The notion of establishing 'areas of higher density linguistic significance' is a key theme evident throughout the report, and we have given careful consideration to the proposition.

Our Welsh language strategy, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*, recognises the importance of areas where Welsh is the natural language of daily life within the community. The Welsh Government therefore agrees that designating areas of 'higher density linguistic significance' [Recommendation 2] is important in order to protect Welsh-speaking communities from further language shift.

We will give further and detailed consideration to understand how the designation could work in practice [Recommendation 3–8], and whether it is appropriate and necessary to place the 'designation of areas of higher density linguistic significance' on a statutory basis. The designation of areas of higher density linguistic significance will be an important lever to manage, review, amend or formulate policies that can safeguard and create favourable conditions for the language to thrive. Recommendations 3–8 also rely on data at lower geographical level which is only available from the census – there is currently some uncertainty of the future of the census.

### **What are we doing?**

- Current resource allocations and capacity do not enable us to establish a specific unit within the Welsh Government to develop and co-ordinate public policy relevant to areas of higher density linguistic significance [Recommendation 8].
- Under the leadership of the Cymraeg 2050 Division, we have established Prosiect BRO to understand better what is driving the current language shift in our higher density areas. The intention is that Prosiect BRO will provide the socio-linguistic assessment that will drive public policy for the future.

- We will continue to draw on the finding of Prosiect BRO in order to inform our understanding of areas of higher density linguistic significance.
- We will also continue to make the most of the Welsh language Impact Assessment process to consider how specific public policy and legislation across the Welsh Government can contribute to the vitality of areas of higher density linguistic significance.
- We will also ensure that the Welsh Government's internal Cymraeg 2050 Programme Board continues to consider and provide focus on areas of higher density linguistic significance as part of its discussions.

## **What are we going to do?**

- We agree with designating 'areas of higher density linguistic significance' and we also agree with the Commission that this must be done in a way which avoids creation of a 'Gaeltacht'. The Welsh language belongs to everyone and we want to ensure that people across the whole of Wales have an important role in enabling the language to thrive and remain as a community language. The mechanism by which areas are identified will be key to achieving this balance.
- The Welsh Government will convene a short-term forum of relevant public authorities and others to consider possible implications of designating areas in more detail, and to help us take designation forward in a practical way which delivers the strengths envisaged in the Report while being conscious of any unintended and adverse consequences.

## 5. The Economy

### Summary of the Economy chapter:

The Commission's report emphasises the dependence of minority languages on their location within the economic order, arguing that interventions and strategies addressing that economic order are crucial. The Welsh economy is influenced by complex processes and is linked to the broader UK and global economies. However, organisations involved in economic development in Wales, the Commission argues, do not always prioritise the particular challenges and opportunities of areas of higher density linguistic significance. The Commission argues that these areas were primarily located in western, rural and semi-rural regions and that they face structural challenges such as poor transport infrastructure, a labour market that does not always meet the needs of industry and lagging productivity. Additionally, demographic changes, including the out-migration of younger adults and a growing older population present further structural economic and linguistic challenges.

The Commission argues that mainstream economic development policies have not closed the Gross Value Added (GVA) gap with the rest of the UK or halted linguistic decline. Economic development policy must move away from thinking of economic disadvantage as a matter of income and output only. The focus should be on ensuring that the economy provides the essential services and social infrastructure, as well as income for people, if the communities are to be maintained. The Commission recommends that the Welsh Government should develop an economic development strategy tailored to the needs of these areas, promoting approaches to economic development that focus on the foundational needs of the communities.

The Commission's report discusses specific economic policies and activities that could benefit areas of higher density linguistic significance, in turn offering a number of recommendations.

The Commission recommends supporting social enterprises and locally owned businesses, as they are more likely to operate through the medium of Welsh and retain profits locally. Agricultural policy should consider the Welsh language, with support for family farms across Wales. The visitor economy should prioritise community benefit and sustainable activity, whilst the principles of [\*Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy 2035\*](#) should be considered by other local authorities.

The report highlighted the value and particularly the investment through wages made by the public sector in Welsh-speaking communities. Health board expenditure on staff costs and efforts to train and provide career pathways to professional skills and jobs aimed at local populations were commended, and a recommendation made to broaden and increase the number of such schemes. Universities and housing associations were also identified as organisations with significant spending power and potential to collaborate and invest in communities and local economies, further directing and circulating substantial expenditure within areas of higher density linguistic significance.

Employment influences decisions to stay, return, or settle in Welsh-speaking communities, and better data is needed to support labour market policies. The Commission also stressed the need to carefully manage significant economic developments, such as the Wylfa site in Ynys Môn, to limit negative impacts on local communities and the Welsh language.

Grants and public investment, the Commission argued, are means of facilitating or enabling developments within communities that would not otherwise be possible. Public procurement processes should be augmented and scored in relation to the circulation of money within the local economy and the impact on the Welsh language. Developing some towns as hubs with services and social or leisure opportunities could also attract individuals and families to settle in the area.

Finally, the Commission noted that whilst mobility is part of people's life experiences, it is of the view that current patterns of out-migration by younger people from areas of higher density linguistic significance are harmful. The Commission argued it would be appropriate for the Welsh Government to address the issue of out-migration of young people alongside supporting those who decide to remain or settle in the areas in question. A recommendation is made that the Welsh Government should develop an intelligence, research and communication programme to support and incentivise young people to stay, return or settle within areas of higher density linguistic significance.

The report's chapter on the economy concludes with a discussion of how work should be taken forward in relation to the economy of areas of higher density linguistic significance. The Commission argue that a specific vehicle or body is needed to guide and co-ordinate economic development activities within these areas. A recommendation that the Welsh Government establish such a body to lead and co-ordinate efforts is made, alongside a proposed terms of reference for its operations. These include developing policies or strategies in the context of areas of higher density linguistic significance; mainstreaming economic policies; influencing wider economic development structures; developing partnerships and sharing capacity on the ground; developing the understanding of the relationship between the economy and the Welsh language; and leading efforts to attract young people to stay, return or settle within areas of higher density linguistic significance. The Commission also recommends establishing a Centre of Excellence to develop a better understanding of the interrelationship between the economy and the Welsh language. The Centre should support the wider work in relation to economic policy.

### **Welsh Government response:**

The Welsh Government's Economic Mission is pan-Wales and takes into account the interrelationship with the Welsh language and language planning and will continue to do so this Senedd term. In addition to the Mission, there are four Regional Economic Frameworks which were co-produced with business and wider stakeholders for each region of Wales and describe and take account of particular regional opportunities and needs. We are also



working closely with the local authorities and the Corporate Joint Committees who are instrumental in the delivery of economic development.

The evaluation of the current ARFOR programme will be key to further informing the Economic Mission and Regional Economic Frameworks. Its findings, alongside ARFOR II's 'pause and reflect' period, are opportunities to consider the learning from the programme and to identify policies and activities that will help address the specific economic and linguistic needs of the areas of higher density linguistic significance. At this point in the current Senedd Term, the Welsh Government will not look to create a new economic development strategy tailored to the economic needs of areas of higher density linguistic significance [Recommendation 9]. However, the learning from the ARFOR II programme will inform our future efforts to support the economies of Welsh-speaking communities, and help identify opportunities for mainstreaming and incorporating language planning policy within wider Welsh Government economic policy.

Moreover, we agree with the principle reflected within Recommendation 9, that economic development policy in these areas should look to support the foundational economy in particular. The foundational economy holds significant importance within Welsh-speaking communities, particularly in relation to the Welsh language. For instance, the social care sector employs nearly 85,000 individuals across Wales. These roles not only contribute positively to the economies of Welsh-speaking communities but also rely on and foster a workforce that utilizes the Welsh language in their professional settings. Supporting the foundational economy therefore is a key commitment in our [Economic resilience and reconstruction mission](#).

The tourism and visitor economy sector specifically, is of strategic importance for the Welsh Government in relation to the foundational economy. Our approach is centred around the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and seeks to work with stakeholders to deliver foundational economy objectives set out in our [Foundational economy: mission statement](#). ARFOR II's 'pause and reflect' period will offer an opportunity to consider this wider work that has been done to support the foundational economy, and to identify opportunities to adopt, mainstream and tailor successful approaches to the economies of Welsh-speaking communities.

The Report argues for additional support to community initiatives and businesses in order to strengthen Welsh as a community language [Recommendation 10]. However, dedicated support is already available across Wales to start and grow businesses such as through Business Wales and the Development Bank for Wales – both consider the needs of regions and businesses across Wales and are available both in Welsh and English with a place-based approach taken to delivery. The Welsh Government has also committed to double the number of employee owned businesses in Wales during this Senedd term which ensure that businesses continue to operate and employ people in their local communities.

We have established the Perthyn project with the aim to empower communities to create new social businesses where the Welsh language is a

central part of the enterprise. Perthyn provides specialist support and advice to community groups as well as a small grant fund for capacity building.

We agree that agriculture is a vital part of Wales' economic makeup, and that the sector plays a key role in supporting the Welsh language within our rural communities [Recommendation 11]. The Sustainable Farming Scheme will deliver on the four Sustainable Land Management objectives established in the [Agriculture \(Wales\) Act](#) which places a specific emphasis on the importance and use of the Welsh language; "conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources and promote public access to and engagement with them, and to sustain the Welsh language and promote and facilitate its use". Our ambition is to support rural communities and the Welsh language by developing and implementing a scheme that supports and keeps farmers farming in Wales. Therefore, we will review the revised proposals for the Scheme to ensure it provides at least the same, if not more opportunities for use of the Welsh language.

Our strategy for the visitor economy, [Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy](#), aims to develop the sector in a manner that delivers benefits for people and places and ensures environmental sustainability alongside social and cultural enrichment. Our aim is to ensure that economic growth and wider wellbeing benefits ultimately enhance the quality of life of everyone, whether they are visitors, local people or business owners.

In relation to the *Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy 2035 Plan*, this is a matter for the local authorities and the national parks and the Welsh Government will ensure that it is drawn to the attention of those authorities more widely [Recommendation 12].

Although Recommendation 13 is a matter for individual health boards and universities, the Welsh Government accepts and agrees with the principle of the recommendation. NHS Wales and universities are key employers throughout Wales and within Welsh-speaking communities, and the wages paid represent a significant investment in our communities.

We accept the need to ensure that we make the most of opportunities to promote the use of the Welsh language through public spending [Recommendation 14]. The Welsh Government, local authorities and many other public authorities have a duty under the Welsh Language Standards to consider the Welsh language when creating and implementing policy in the allocation of grants and when procuring services.

The Welsh Government also undertakes appraisals and impact assessments of legislation and policy implementation. These assessments will include specific consideration of the impact upon the Welsh language.

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 provides for a framework to enhance the well-being of the people of Wales by improving public services through social partnership working, promoting fair work and social responsible public procurement. As part of the Act, a statutory duty is placed upon public bodies to consider socially responsible public procurement

when carrying out procurement, to set objectives in relation to well-being goals and to ensure that socially responsible outcomes are pursued through supply chains. Under the Act, public bodies are also required to publish annual reports on their public procurement activities. Reports will provide insight and scrutiny of procurement processes and progress towards procurement goals and well-being objectives. To support this, the Welsh Government is collaborating with stakeholders and social partners to develop a set of metrics that will capture the proportion of spend on opportunities for employees to learn, use or enhance their Welsh language skills.

The out-migration of young people represents a structural economic and linguistic challenge within Welsh-speaking communities. We agree that migration, and the out-migration of young people from rural areas in particular, relates to a range of policy areas. Whilst we would not deter anyone's right to move, we don't want young people to feel that they have no choice but to move in order to succeed, have a home, and fulfil their potential, due to lack of opportunities within a reasonable distance from their local community. [Recommendation 15].

## **What are we doing?**

- The ARFOR programme has sought to pilot a number of economic interventions in the four local authority areas (Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire) which seeks to support areas of higher density linguistic significance. In doing so, it has sought to avoid duplication with other programmes and activity and to add value to other activity which is relevant. A period of pause and reflect is proposed, working with the local authorities and others, to consider lessons learnt and the findings of the independent evaluation, to help inform a way forward [Recommendation 16]. This work will also need to consider how those lessons learnt are taken forward and which elements of the programme may be mainstreamed. This recommendation will need to be further considered in the light of any proposed work, whilst mindful of existing and emerging structures, such as Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) and the local authorities' priorities, which also have a key interest in this area of work.
- The Welsh Government's [Foundational economy: delivery plan](#) sets out our policy interventions designed to strengthen the foundational economy.
- The Welsh Government accepts the principle of needing a better understanding of the interrelationships between the economy and the Welsh language and will explore opportunities to do so through the Economic Intelligence Wales and Economic Policy [Recommendation 17]. The Government commissioned and published [The Welsh language and the economy: a review of evidence and methods](#) in 2020. Both iterations of the [ARFOR programme](#) are in part, attempts to develop our understanding of the relationship between the economy and the Welsh language. The evaluation of the [ARFOR II](#) programme (2022-25), alongside research commissioned through the programme itself will further develop our understanding of the links between economic processes and the language.

- The Welsh Government agrees that the out-migration of young people from Welsh-speaking communities represents a structural economic and linguistic challenge, and will continue to do so into the future. Indeed, we accept that the out-migration of young people poses structural economic challenges to areas across Wales, including areas beyond Welsh-speaking communities. The learning acquired in delivering programmes designed to address the challenges of out-migration as part of the ARFOR II programme, alongside the research undertaken as part of both ARFOR programmes, have advanced our understanding of the challenge and possible responses [Recommendation 15].
- Our capital investment programmes, Brilliant Basics and the Wales Tourism Investment Fund, also include funding conditions that require projects to demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and promoting the Welsh language.
- The Welsh Government will continue to support the approaches already being adopted by health boards and universities in Wales to promote local employment. Through our [A Healthier Wales](#) and the [foundational economy](#) for example, we will seek to ensure that we spend this budget in a way that will benefit our people as well as our economy.

## What are we going to do?

- The Welsh Government awaits the findings of the independent evaluation of the ARFOR II programme. Careful consideration of these findings will inform the next steps that Welsh Government will take to support the economies of Welsh-speaking communities. This may include, as part of ARFOR II's 'pause and reflect' period, drawing on the learning from the programme and working with relevant local authorities to identify policies and activities that will help address the economic and linguistic needs of the areas of higher density linguistic significance. [Recommendation 9], and offer an opportunity to consider appropriate delivery models for economic policy within Welsh-speaking communities [Recommendation 16].
- As part of its 'pause and reflect' period, ARFOR II will also be expected to consider the opportunities to mainstream language planning policy within wider Welsh Government economic policy.
- The Welsh Government is committed to creating and supporting the economic conditions that enable young people to stay, return and settle within our Welsh-speaking communities. We will initially establish a cross-government task force to develop a comprehensive response that addresses the requirements of the recommendation. The taskforce will give particular consideration to the findings and learning derived from the ARFOR II Programme, as well as the evidence base available to the Government. The taskforce will seek to better understand the bases and motives for out-ward migration and ensure that young people in particular are fully aware of the opportunities available to them within areas of higher density linguistic significance [Recommendation 15].
- We will continue to explore and exploit opportunities to commission, support and encourage further research in this area. Our forthcoming 'Cymraeg 2050: Areas of Research Interest' publication for example, will support a dialogue with the external research community around the

research interests of the Welsh Government. This includes a section dedicated to issues relating to the economy. We are also exploring arrangements, as noted in response to Recommendation 8, that will enable closer collaboration across relevant policy areas to ensure that research as well as policy is developed in a manner that responds to the particular circumstances and challenges facing areas of higher density linguistic significance [Recommendation 17].

- The Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) Etc. (Wales) Bill aims to promote sustainable tourism, support local communities and empower local authorities to invest in the local visitor economy. The Bill aims to give local authorities the choice to introduce a levy on overnight stays in visitor accommodation in their area. This money can be invested into local services and infrastructure to support tourism in their area, including on initiatives to support the Welsh language. The Bill was introduced in November 2024, and is currently at Stage 2. The visitor levy will be discretionary, therefore, the extent of the impact upon the Welsh language will vary according to the local authority responsible for implementing the levy and investing the proceeds [Recommendation 12].

## 6. Welsh language workplaces

### Summary of the Welsh language workplaces chapter:

In their chapter on Welsh language workplaces [Recommendation 18–20], the Commission emphasises the importance of using Welsh in the workplace, especially for those who do not have opportunities to use Welsh at home or in everyday social networks. The Commission draws particular attention to the role of public sector organisations in Wales in supporting the Welsh language both internally and in realising their potential linguistic impact externally, within the community. Public sector organisations and bodies, the Commission argues, should be moved along a linguistic continuum through careful, reasonable and practical planning that increases the use of Welsh over time.

The Commission recommends standardising Welsh language proficiency measurements across public sector organisations, in order to facilitate recruitment processes and support language planning within the organisations [Recommendation 18]. The Commission also discusses the importance of developing language proficiency within the workforce, offering Welsh-medium apprenticeships, and to increase the adoption and use of language technology to facilitate the use of Welsh in the workplace.

The Commission acknowledges the importance of leaders in the public sector, both in setting a tone in relation to Welsh, and a culture that is open and inclusive – an important basis for stimulating and facilitating the use of Welsh in the workplace [Recommendation 19]. The Commission recommends developing courses to support leaders of public sector organisations and workplaces within areas of higher density linguistic significance.

Additionally, the Commission recommends seeking to ensure that public bodies subject to the Welsh Language Standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 state the extent of their use of Welsh internally, and the steps that they will take to move the organisations concerned along a language continuum [Recommendation 20].

Finally, the Commission touches on the use of Welsh in private sector workplaces and the need for local support and advice to encourage businesses to use more Welsh.

### Welsh Government response:

The Welsh Government agrees that the use of Welsh in the workplace is vital to the viability of the language. Aim 6 of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy outlines our vision and strategy to support workplaces to provide opportunities to use, practice and learn Welsh. The implementation of Welsh Language Standards is an important part of ensuring that public bodies offer more opportunities for their staff to use Welsh at work. Standards, and guidance provided by the Welsh Language Commissioner, have supported public bodies to improve the way they plan their bilingual workforce and provide more opportunities for staff to acknowledge, use, and enhance their Welsh language skills. However, we agree that more can and should be done to support the development of the Welsh language within workplaces.

The Welsh Government agrees that using a common framework to measure proficiency will support employers, including public sector organisations, to improve the process of workforce planning based on the requirement for Welsh language skills. The Welsh Government also agrees that such a framework should be based on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Work has already started to develop a standard method to describe Welsh language ability in order to achieve this intention [Recommendation 18].

The Welsh Government agrees that public sector organisations located in areas of higher density linguistic significance have a valuable contribution to make in facilitating and increasing the use of the Welsh language in the workplace [Recommendation 19]. Public bodies that have a presence within areas of higher density linguistic significance have a role in establishing and maintaining norms and expectations in relation to the Welsh language in the workplace. The leaders of such public bodies should be expected to ensure that linguistic aspects of their organisations empower its workforce and reflect the community in which they are located.

The Welsh Government agrees that technology has a large contribution to make to maintaining bilingual workplaces e.g. via interpretation and translation automation to assist suitably qualified human translators, the use of Welsh language interfaces, spellcheckers and grammar checkers. Such technology should be widely available in workplaces all over Wales. As to the recommendation for a specific 'Leading in a Welsh-speaking Community' course, the Welsh Government believe that this can be accomplished through the existing 'Leading in a Bilingual Country' course. A key aspect of that course is the exposure offered to leaders situated across Wales to different linguistic and local contexts throughout Wales, including areas of higher density linguistic significance. All leaders attending the programme should be given the opportunity to benefit and learn from exposure to the linguistic context of Welsh-speaking communities [Recommendation 19].

The Welsh Government agrees that where the Welsh language is used extensively within the community it is appropriate for public sector organisations to move towards operating through the medium of Welsh to an extent that is feasible.

## **What are we doing?**

- Part 2 of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill provides for common reference levels to describe Welsh language ability. This will enable individuals, including learners, teachers, parents and employers to have a common understanding of what users of the Welsh language 'can do' at each level.
- The Bill places a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare a Code to describe Welsh language ability that is based on the CEFR's common reference levels.
- We agree that leaders in Wales would continue to benefit from our current 'Leading in a Bilingual Country' programme. The Welsh Government has



committed to support the programme for a further four years to enable more leaders to take advantage of this opportunity.

- The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill places a duty on Welsh Ministers to review the Welsh Language Standards ('standards') which are specified under section 26 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The purpose of the review will be to determine whether amendments are necessary to any of the standards relating to improving or assessing the Welsh language skills of the workforce.
- Furthermore, the review of standards will consider whether the Welsh Language Promotion Standards need to be amended to facilitate meeting targets in the Welsh language strategy, *Cymraeg 2050*.
- In January 2025, we published our priorities for Welsh language technology, based on the work we'd carried out under our former *Welsh Language Technology Action Plan* (2018-2024). These priorities are as follows:
  - technology to increase the daily use of Welsh
  - making sure everyone can access Welsh language technology
  - improving Welsh language artificial intelligence (AI), and speech and language technologies (by sharing data and other means)

## **What are we going to do?**

- We will seek advice and support from the National Centre for Learning Welsh and other experts on the development and wider adoption of the Code to describe Welsh language ability.
- We will continue to develop 'Leading in a Bilingual Country', ensuring that the importance of geographical and community context, particularly within areas of higher density linguistic significance will be emphasised to leaders situated within these areas and beyond.
- The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill makes it clear that the review of standards must be completed within a 12-month period starting with the day following the publication of the Code to describe Welsh language ability. We consider it to be premature to amend any relevant standards before undertaking the review of the standards until this time to ensure alignment with the Code. We therefore propose to give consideration to Recommendation 20 when conducting the review required by the Bill.
- We will continue funding the ARFer programme, a behavioural scientific programme for workplaces (including an app) so that more people can use their Welsh at work. We will continue working with Microsoft on our business case for and partnership on Welsh language technology. We'll roll out 'Cymraeg mewn clic' across the Welsh Government. This one-click solution helps people easily switch their workplace computer into Welsh. We'll share the coding and background Information with other organisations so they too can increase the numbers using Welsh language technology in the workplace. We'll also continue to collaborate on Welsh language artificial intelligence (such as our work with Microsoft to ensure Welsh language functionality in Copilot).



## 7. Community development

### Summary of the Community development chapter:

In their chapter on Community Development [Recommendation 21–24], the Commission states that community development has an important role in empowering and encouraging participation in community initiatives that in turn help to increase the use of the language.

The Commission recognises that a holistic approach is required to strengthen Welsh-speaking communities, where there is an interdependency between housing, economy, community development and language planning. COVID-19 showed how some communities came together and were able to sustain themselves in challenging circumstances. In north-west Wales, there are numerous examples of integrated and holistic models of community development. The Commission highlights the importance of bringing together existing expertise on a local basis to realise a vision and draw up practical solutions for the sustainability of the language.

The Commission believes that more work should be undertaken to understand how communities can have more of a say and take ownership of assets – in many cases, community groups have shown leadership by maintaining and safeguarding local services and facilities. Funding should also be available to support social enterprises and community groups. The Commission acknowledges that policies encouraging community ownership can also be seen to be supportive of the Welsh language in areas with a high-density of Welsh-speakers.

Long term planning is vital and to support this aim, the Commission feels that there is a need for a longer-term funding commitment for community groups such as the mentrau iaith.

### Welsh Government response:

The Welsh Government agrees that community development principles are vitally important to the sustainability of communities and consequently the sustainability of Welsh as a living community language. The Welsh Government strongly believes that communities themselves are better placed to understand the challenges they face and the opportunities available to them. Our aim is to empower and facilitate community capacity building in partnership with our key stakeholders [Recommendation 21].

Longer term grant funding is already available within Welsh Government with the introduction of a new longer duration of funding and benchmarking policy announced in 2022. The Welsh Government's grants scheme to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language is currently funded on a year-by-year basis. [A review of the Welsh Government grant scheme to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language](#) was published in 2023. Work is currently being undertaken on a business case to extend the grant scheme to a three-year funding term, which will be aligned with the benchmarking policy. [Recommendation 22].

The Welsh Government agrees that grants are available as well as loans provided at a preferential rate to support community initiatives within areas of linguistic significance. [Recommendation 23]. We also agree to offer help community groups develop networks that aim to share good practice and help each other to learn from their experiences [Recommendation 24]. We acknowledge that there are some networks already in existence. Cwmpas is also responsible for the Perthyn project, supporting new community groups to turn ideas into new social enterprises. Cwmpas has agreed to develop a network of these newly formed groups.

## What are we doing?

- The Welsh Government is committed to place-based approaches, and this is central to its vision for community development.
- We have already invested in the [Gweithredu'n Lleol](#), local action resource pack, which provides a coherent methodology for community based language planners and community development practitioners. The aim is to identify the specific needs, challenges and opportunities of a language and what interventions are required to support the language. The resource pack is generally used by the mentrau iaith in partnership with local communities. We acknowledge the pack needs to be updated as well as making it readily available and user friendly to a wider audience [Recommendation 21].
- We are currently working on a business case to move our current year by year funding cycle for our Welsh language grant scheme to a longer-term funding allocation. Our aim is to introduce a three-year funding term from the next financial year onwards [Recommendation 22].
- We already invest financially in community initiatives. The [Community Facilities Programme](#) provides capital grants to help communities across Wales to purchase and improve community assets. Applicants must demonstrate direct involvement with the local community whilst developing their application. We strongly believe that community facilities help to develop social capital within areas of higher density linguistic significance [Recommendation 23].
- The [Community Asset Loan Fund](#) is operated by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action on behalf of the Welsh Government. The Fund provides long term loan funding to enable communities to purchase and improve community assets. Currently, if the community projects are aligned with Government priorities (real living wage employer, net zero action plan), the fund offers a 0.5% discount on the loan rate [Recommendation 23].
- The Welsh Government established a Community Assets Task and Finish Group, in response to the recommendations of the Senedd Local Government and Housing Committee Report into Community Assets (2022). The group is tasked to consider relevant matters regarding community ownership of assets and developing options to advance the community asset agenda in Wales. This work will include reviewing: the statutory and regulatory framework options needed to support local communities; the current funding landscape supporting community assets; together with a review of what other support packages may be required to support communities seeking to acquire and manage community assets in

Wales. It is anticipated that the Group will present their recommendations to Welsh Government by the autumn of 2025 [Recommendation 23].

## What are we going to do?

- We will work with key stakeholders to update the Gweithredu'n Lleol resource pack to ensure that it continues to align with the linguistic needs of our communities as well as develop further community and economic development elements. We will also consider introducing other place-based planning methodologies, which have been developed and used widely in recent years. Moreover, we will work closely with the Prosiect BRO socio-linguistic study team to learn from their community research processes.
- We will work with key stakeholders to train and empower communities to use the Gweithredu'n Lleol resource pack to help them better understand the socio-economic and linguistic needs of their local area.
- We will work with the Community Asset Loan Fund to enable it to offer an additional 0.5% discounted rate for projects that support the use of the Welsh language, particularly within areas of higher density linguistic significance. [Recommendation 23].
- In 2022, the Welsh Government established the [Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan](#). The plan includes the Perthyn project, which helps community groups to turn ideas into viable social enterprises or community-led housing projects. We agree that sharing good practice and learning from the experiences of individual organisations is vital. Therefore, as part of the Perthyn project workplan from 2025-26, the Perthyn project delivery partner has agreed to establish a network for the Perthyn funded community social enterprises. This will enable sharing of good practice and be an effective mechanism to support and help the development of social businesses. We also acknowledge the work that other stakeholders such as ARFOR, Cymunedoli and Rhwyd are undertaking to support collaboration between social businesses. We will discuss the opportunities to work with these organisations, share good practice as well as opportunities to mainstream community language planning principles [Recommendation 24].

## 8. Housing

### Summary of the Housing chapter:

In their chapter on housing [Recommendation 25–34], the Commission states that insufficient affordable housing poses a threat to the sustainability of areas of higher density linguistic significance, especially when young people and families are unable to find appropriate and affordable homes. The Commission stated that it is imperative that housing developments should be widely available, affordable and based on local needs.

Affordable homes can help secure the sustainability of communities including the sustainability of the language. The Commission strongly believes that housing developments should not lead to the displacement of local communities, as development beyond local demand can have a ‘devastating effect’ on communities and the language. The Local Housing Market Housing Assessments (LMHA) have a key role in preparing a robust evidence base in the preparation of local housing strategies. The Commission expressed concern that the current LMHA template does not provide considerations relating to the Welsh language. The Commission also felt that LHMA are based on broad estimates and that data does not match housing needs on a local level.

The Commission acknowledges the roles of the network of housing enablers and sees them as an example of good practice in the development of affordable housing. The Commission also recognises the role of housing associations and local authorities in responding to the needs of housing in areas of higher density linguistic significance. It also points out the associated risks that can have a negative impact on new housing developments i.e. rising costs of materials, skill shortages and land availability. The Welsh Government’s investment in the construction of affordable housing is welcomed, as well as greater flexibility in the allocation of funding to ensure that smaller developments are viable.

The *Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan* is a Welsh Government Programme for Government commitment established to support Welsh-speaking communities with a high number of second homes. The plan’s interventions are currently delivered as a pilot, but the Commission recommends [Recommendation 24] that the Welsh Language Community Housing Plan’s interventions are made permanent. It also welcomes the [\*Dwyfor second homes and affordability pilot\*](#) and expresses the need for the on-going independent evaluation of the pilot to consider the impact on the Welsh language.

The Commission believes that community-led housing developments provide additional solutions for communities but highlighted the need for funding streams to help community groups to develop housing that will be affordable. The Commission recommends that the use of Section 106 by planning authorities can provide conditions on planning applications. It also noted that local authorities and planning authorities should consider whether models can be developed for the letting of social housing where the Welsh language could be one positive factor [Recommendation 33]. The Commission also

recommended that the Welsh Government should work with mortgage providers to improve competition within mortgage provision for properties with restrictions placed on them [Recommendation 24].

### **Welsh Government response:**

The Government fully understand the housing challenges many communities are facing. LHMA recognises that housing challenges can vary from one community to the next. However, where evidence demonstrates a particular challenge to the supply of affordable housing, the Welsh Government will expect to see this reflected in the LHMA alongside consideration of the impact upon the Welsh language.

Undertaking an assessment of housing need is a requirement for local authorities, discharged through the LHMA process. The Welsh Government provides funding towards Rural Housing Enablers (RHE) in five local authorities in Wales. Where in situ, RHEs support local authorities in undertaking assessments of local housing need through the LHMA process and undertake bespoke community needs assessments where required by the local authority and within budgetary means [Recommendation 26]. The Welsh Government understands that smaller sites are more likely to be adversely impacted by development constraints that may be easier to accommodate and be more readily absorbed into viability cost models on larger developments. The Welsh Government produce Acceptable Cost Guidelines (ACGs) containing cost matrix for use within the Capital Funding Application process for Social Housing Grant. ACGs are regularly reviewed to reflect market trends [Recommendation 27].

The *Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan* was created in 2022 initially as a three-year pilot. A central element of the plan was the agreement to evaluate the interventions. Work is currently underway to procure the services of an independent evaluator. The findings of the evaluation will provide guidance on the future direction of the plan [Recommendation 28].

Empowering communities is a core element of the plan and through our Perthyn project, we provide specialist advice and support to our Welsh-speaking communities to turn their ideas into viable social enterprises or community-led housing projects. Through the Perthyn project, we have awarded 65 small grants to support these community enterprises to date. The [Cultural Ambassadors Scheme](#) was launched in March 2024, where people, businesses and the third sector can enjoy online modules to learn more about Welsh culture and the Welsh language. To date, over 200 individuals have become part of the Cultural Ambassador Network where they can share their learnt knowledge with their friends, family, visitors, customers, and their community.

Another intervention is safeguarding Welsh place names which are integral features of the cultural and historic landscape of Wales. As they are particularly important to the visual and aural character of areas of higher density linguistic significance, we recognise the need to value and retain the rich legacy of our Welsh place names. Based on the research we commissioned, the Cymraeg 2050 Division and Cadw will continue to take

steps to ensure that Welsh names of all kinds are protected and promoted in the audio-visual landscape.

The Welsh Government has provided financial support to Cyngor Gwynedd, as part of the Dwyfor second homes and affordability pilot and in recognition of Gwynedd's pioneering use of the new Article 4 (planning) powers. This supported work to develop underpinning evidence, design and deliver the Article 4 Direction. In essence, this means that planning consent is required to change what is currently a dwelling house (primary home) into either a second home or short-term holiday let. The Direction, its implications and its impact are being considered as part of the independent evaluation and this will continue to be of use to others considering similar action [Recommendation 30].

Local letting policies are matters for local and planning authorities, who are required to have an allocations scheme for determining priorities in allocating housing. Local authorities are best placed to understand and respond to the housing need of their local communities, and to prioritise those who are most in need. When determining their specific schemes, all local authorities in Wales must have regard to the Welsh Government's Code of Guidance for Local Authorities: Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness. [Recommendation 33].

Section 106 agreements are agreements made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. A Section 106 agreement (S106) is a legally binding private contract between a developer (or a number of interested parties) and a Local Planning Authority (LPA) that operates alongside a statutory planning permission. Such agreements require developers to carry out specified planning obligations when implementing planning permissions and are the result of negotiations on these matters between the parties. Any Section 106 agreement should be compliant with the Local Development Plan and relevant planning policies [Recommendation 33].

## **What are we doing?**

- We are currently looking at the process of procuring the services of an independent evaluator to evaluate the interventions of the *Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan*. This work will provide the Welsh Government with a better insight into the effectiveness of its approaches and help decide how best to deliver the plan in the future.
- The Dwyfor second homes and affordability pilot is subject to an ongoing independent evaluation. The first phase report was published in February 2025 and presented the theory of change and the findings of exploratory research, including the perceptions of young people regarding the impact of second homes upon the Welsh language within the target area. The future phases of the evaluation will consider the range of initiatives and actions and their impact, including any impact upon the Welsh language. The evaluation will help inform national policy, including in regard to areas of higher density linguistic significance.

- The Welsh Government has a number of interventions already in place to support local authorities to bring empty properties back in use, including the Transforming Towns Programme which includes grants, Property Loans, and the Empty Property Enforcement Fund; the Empty Homes Grant; Social Housing Grant; Land and Buildings Development Fund; the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme; and Leasing Scheme Wales.
- Terms and Conditions of the Welsh Government grants offer letter already place a requirement on recipients to act in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the aims of *Cymraeg 2050*. The Welsh Government will be updating the standard loan terms and conditions template to include this requirement in respect of loans.
- In response to the local planning authority engagement exercise on Article 4 direction in Gwynedd, UK Finance noted that they had seen the limiting effect of planning powers and restrictive covenants on mortgageability over several years. Work commissioned by Eryri National Park, however, indicates limited evidence of a negative impact. The Welsh Government has engaged with UK Finance on the matter to better understand the issue and consider potential interventions that might increase lending appetite on properties subject to restrictions. A further market analysis of the issue in Wales will be conducted to better understand the extent of the issue and as a basis to consider appropriate interventions.

## **What are we going to do?**

- The Welsh Government is in the process of undertaking a review of Local Housing Market Assessments and will explore opportunities to strengthen the consideration of the Welsh language.
- Acceptable Cost Guidelines (ACG) are scheduled to have an external review during 2025-26, at which time the Welsh Government shall be able to consider whether any additional ACG adjustments are needed to help release smaller sites.
- The Welsh Government are currently exploring how best to provide a long-term funding solution for community-led housing in Wales. This will include engaging with Cwmpas on emerging loan fund proposals.
- We will revise the *Allocation of accommodation and homelessness: guidance for local authorities* to ensure its alignment with *Cymraeg 2050 objectives*. We will also provide further guidance to registered social landlords on consideration of the Welsh language when letting social housing.



## **9. Town and Country Planning**

### **Summary of the Town and County Planning chapter:**

In their chapter on Town and Country Planning [Recommendation 35], the Commission acknowledges the considerable debate on the relationship between town and country planning and language planning. The Commission also acknowledges the complexities between both disciplines. The Commission argues the need to strengthen the link between both disciplines. It is essential that language planners provide support and advice to town and country planning practitioners when relevant policies are being reviewed or when new policies are created.

The Commission strongly believes that town and country planning can make a valuable contribution to the sustainability of the language in areas of higher density linguistic significance.

The Commission held a workshop for both language planners and town and country planning practitioners to discuss the complexities, policy priorities and actions that could be taken to make necessary improvements to town and country planning policies and guidelines.

The Commission also reviewed a number of policy and guidance documents related to town and country planning and suggested that these needed to be revised. The Commission also stated that both language planners and town and country planners should improve their skills and knowledge within each other's disciplines.

The Commission decided to publish a standalone report on town and country planning to ensure that planning needs are considered in all parts of Wales as well as areas of higher density linguistic significance.

The Commission published its report in February 2025.

### **Welsh Government response:**

The Welsh Government is currently considering the findings of the Commission's standalone report on town and country planning and its 14 recommendations. We will respond to the recommendations in due course.



## 10. Equality, diversity and inclusion

### Summary of the Equality, diversity and inclusion chapter:

The Commission was keenly aware that there is considerable diversity of background and identity within the Welsh-speaking population. Many Welsh speakers facing inequalities and from minority communities live in Welsh-speaking communities.

Beginning from the position that Welsh-speaking communities should be places where the Welsh language belongs to everyone, the Commission acknowledges that the Welsh Government has a range of equality, diversity and inclusion policies that are relevant to everyone in Wales, including Welsh speakers within areas of higher density linguistic significance. Although they did not feel its remit extended to scrutinising these all-Wales equality, diversity and inclusion policies, the Commission argued that because language is not a protected characteristic, language groups risk being excluded from discussions about equality, diversity and inclusion.

Moreover, the Commission argued that it is sometimes assumed that rural and semi-rural areas such as Welsh-speaking communities are typified by different patterns of protected characteristics to those witnessed within metropolitan or more urbanised areas. However, the Commission was not convinced that enough research exists to verify the extent to which the lived experiences of minority group members differ between different areas of Wales. More broadly, the Commission was led to conclude that more research is needed to understand the intersectionality between and within minority groups in Welsh-speaking communities.

The Commission's report offers an overview of Census 2021 data in relation to race and ethnicity and the Welsh language, concluding that further research is needed, and more specifically, analysis of data on the Middle layer Super Output Areas (MSOA) or the Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) level. The Commission notes that there is a dedicated chapter to the Welsh language in the Welsh Government's [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#), however, no reference is made to the unique experiences and challenges Black, Asian and minority ethnic people face in rural areas of Wales and within Welsh-speaking communities specifically. Further research and a fuller analysis would, in the Commission's view, enrich public policy debate in relation to the Welsh language.

The Commission's report also offers an overview of Census 2021 data in relation to those with LGBTQ+ identities and the Welsh language, starting from the position that LGBTQ+ people have always been part of Welsh-speaking society. Indeed, the Commission note that Ceredigion and Gwynedd are characterised by some of the highest percentages of number of those identifying as LGBTQ+ in Wales. But, as with race and ethnicity and the Welsh language, the Commission note that further research, particularly MSOA or LSOA analysis of data, as well as further qualitative evidence would enhance our understanding of the possible relationship between the Welsh language and the lived experiences of those with LGBTQ+ identities.

The Commission concluded by making two recommendations aimed at developing our understanding of the intersections between the Welsh language and protected characteristics. Specifically, that the Welsh Government undertake a statistical study of the intersections within Census 2021 data, including an analysis at the MSOA or LSOA level; and that the Welsh Government should establish a task and finish group to examine issues of equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to the Welsh language.

## **Welsh Government response:**

The Government both agrees with the analysis offered by Commission and accepts the recommendations [Recommendation 36–37]. The Welsh Government regrets that the Commission could not draw on sufficient data and evidence data below local authority level or in relation to the lived experiences of individuals living within the areas in question – in order to develop more specific and detailed recommendations. However, we agree that further statistical analysis of Census 2021 data will enable a better understanding of the intersections and relationship between protected characteristics, rurality and the Welsh language [Recommendation 36].

In addition, the socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales on 31st March 2021. The Duty requires relevant public bodies, including Welsh Ministers, to give due regard to the need to reduce inequalities resulting from socio-economic disadvantage when taking strategic decisions. We are also currently working on a Disabled People's Rights Plan. This plan aims to improve access to training and employment for disabled people. Disabled people living in Welsh-speaking communities will have the support they need to participate in working life in their own communities, to thrive and to help ensure that their communities remain active and vibrant. A consultation has recently opened with the aim of specifically seek the views of Welsh speakers, Welsh language specialist groups, and we will be working with partner organisations to take part in the consultation. Based on their input, this will feed into specific actions and goals around Welsh Language in the Plan, though goals and actions across the many different policy areas, will impact Welsh speakers. A Welsh-speaking member of the taskforce will be available during consultation meetings to present the details and address any questions through the participants' preferred language.

## **What are we doing?**

- The Government has made significant progress with the actions and commitments relating to the Welsh language and equality, specifically the Welsh language is rooted in the fabric of our *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan* and *LGBTQ+ Action Plan*. Our intention is for our work in the area of equality and the Welsh language alike, to not only coexist, but to reinforce each other.
- The Cymraeg 2050 division is one of the key supporting delivery partners of the *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan*. Additionally, the Cymraeg 2050 division works with a range of equality and inclusion stakeholders on issues relating to the Welsh language.
- We have already published analysis from Census 2021 data exploring intersections between the ability to speak Welsh and those with protected

[characteristics](#), including ethnicity, [sexual orientation](#) and gender identity, including at local authority level [Recommendation 36].

- Further details regarding our work to date on the Welsh language as part of the Welsh Government's equalities action plans are available on the Welsh Government website.

## **What are we going to do?**

- We will continue, where possible, to include protected characteristics when we analyse Welsh language data, both from surveys and from other sources such as educational data.
- Through our forthcoming 'Cymraeg 2050: Areas of Research Interest' publication, we will seek to communicate to the external research community the types of evidence that will be most useful in informing our decisions. The publication will include a specific reference to the Welsh Government's interest in evidence on the intersection between the Welsh language and protected characteristics.
- In line with the Commission's recommendation, we will establish a task and finish group to address the recommendation and to make further policy suggestions. The task and finish group will draw upon existing and ongoing research. In establishing the group, we will incorporate pre-existing stakeholder groups, including stakeholder groups that already focus on the Welsh language as a part of the *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan* implementation structures. Ensuring that the lived experiences of people from traditionally underrepresented groups will be vital for the success of this work. [Recommendation 37].

## 11. Welsh-medium education

### Summary of the Welsh-medium education chapter:

In its chapter on Welsh-medium education [Recommendation 38 – 49], the Commission acknowledges that the linguistic landscape has changed in our Welsh-speaking communities since the last third of the twentieth century. The Commission strongly believes that Welsh-medium education has the ability to protect, promote and create new Welsh speakers. However, the Commission notes that current provision is not sufficient to sustain the language at a community level in the future.

Every child in Wales deserves to become a Welsh speaker, and as a child's educational journey starts before statutory education, the Commission believes that in areas of higher density linguistic significance, local authorities should encourage and support the use of the Welsh language in early education provision. Children living in areas of higher density linguistic significance should acquire the Welsh language confidently and be literate in both oral and written Welsh when leaving statutory education. The Commission therefore recommends that a target should be set for schools within higher density linguistic significance to be able to provide inclusive Welsh-medium education to students from all backgrounds. In the meantime, schools should be expected to progress along a language continuum. As pupils get older, the exposure to the language decreases, and as they move from primary to secondary education, the percentage of pupils receiving their education through the medium of Welsh decreases, and a further decrease is seen in post-14 and again within post-16 education. The Commission argues that it is key to increase the number of pupils studying a range of qualifications through the medium of Welsh in these age groups, as it will likely increase the number of pupils leaving school to undertake their studies through the medium of Welsh and use their language skills within the workplace.

There are also recommendations for Estyn [Recommendation 44–45], noting that they have an important role in developing supplementary inspection guidance for inspecting Welsh-medium provision and examining the progress in Welsh-medium provision against the aims of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans in areas of higher density linguistic significance.

The Commission expressed a need for Welsh-medium extra-curricular activities, including that the Siarter Iaith project should be evaluated it has a role in reinforcing Welsh as a social language. Furthermore, late immersion centres should receive sufficient resources to achieve their full potential as they are essential for maintaining and supporting the infrastructure of Welsh-medium education.

To be able to increase Welsh-medium provision in schools, the Commission acknowledges the need to meet the needs of the education workforce.

Additional research is needed to understand the situation regarding tertiary and vocational education within areas of higher density linguistic significance. Courses and training provision should meet the needs of the local economy,

however, currently there isn't enough Welsh-medium provision available in these areas.

## **Welsh Government response:**

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill ("the Bill")<sup>1</sup> directly relates to Recommendation 38, 39, 42 and 46. (References to the Bill are references to the Bill as passed by Senedd Cymru on 13 May 2025. The Bill will become law when it receives Royal Assent).

The main objective of this Bill is to contribute towards the goal of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 by aiming to ensure that all pupils are independent and confident Welsh language users, at least, by the time they reach the end of compulsory school age. Furthermore, the aim is for all pupils to develop oral skills equivalent to level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

In summary, the Bill:

- Provides a statutory basis for the target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050, by requiring the Welsh language strategy (under 78 of the Government of Wales Act 2006) to include a target of at least a million Welsh speakers by 2050 as well as other targets relating to the use of the language, including in the workplace and socially.
- Establishes a standard method for describing Welsh language ability based on the common reference levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
- Sets out three language categories for schools with minimum amount of Welsh language education (which includes teaching Welsh as a subject as well as education and training through the medium of Welsh) to be provided in each:
  - "Primarily Welsh Language" category (80%)
  - "Dual Language" category (50%)
  - "Primarily English Language, partly Welsh" category (10%)
- Sets Welsh language learning goals for each language category.
- Links linguistic planning at a national level (by placing a duty on the Welsh Ministers to prepare a National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh), at local authority level (by placing a duty on the local authorities to prepare local Welsh in Education Strategic Plans), and at a local level (by placing a duty on schools to prepare Welsh language education delivery plans).
- Establishes a National Institute for Learning Welsh as a statutory body responsible for supporting people (of all ages) to learn Welsh.

## **What are we doing?**

- We have commitments to open 23 new Welsh-medium primary schools and expand at least 25 Welsh-medium primary schools across Wales over the coming decade – with 8 local authorities focusing on moving their

schools along the linguistic continuum and increasing Welsh language provision.

- The Siarter Iaith aims to inspire children and young people to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives, particularly outside of formal learning settings.
- The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill was passed by the Senedd on 13 May 2025.
- The Bill contains provision to designate statutory language categories for schools. It also includes requirements relating to the amount of Welsh language education provided and to set Welsh language learning goals for each category.
- The Bill allows the Welsh Ministers, by regulation, to increase the minimum provision of Welsh language education over time as factors such as workforce availability change.
- Since 2021, the investment through the late immersion grant (£8.8m) has enabled every local authority to offer late immersion provision in their area. We must celebrate this achievement. The provisions in the Bill build on this work and give a clear message that late immersion is an important part of the local education offer.
- The success of the Bill's implementation is dependent on the capacity of the education system. A workforce with the appropriate language capability needs to be developed. The Government recognises that there are challenges regarding the education workforce – and the Cabinet Secretary for Education has announced that she is developing a strategic education workforce plan for Wales.
- [Recommendation 40] One of the most important aims of *Cymraeg 2050* is to expand Welsh language provision in the early years as an entry point into Welsh-medium education. The Welsh Government has funded Mudiad Meithrin to lead on this expansion through its Set up and Succeed (SaS) programme. In addition to the traditional model of the Cylch Meithrin, new Cylchoedd have been established in English-medium day nurseries and playgroups. This allows Cylch Meithrin sessions to be offered within these English-medium settings, with staff receiving support through Mudiad Meithrin's language immersion training programme, Croesi'r Bont. Furthermore, in the first phase of extending high-quality childcare to all two-year-olds in Wales, the Flying Start programme is being expanded to include 2,500 more children under the age of four.
- In order to support the Programme for Government and *Cymraeg 2050*, work must be supported to expand the Welsh-medium childcare workforce to enable more children under the age of 5 to access play, learning and early years care through the medium of Welsh. Additional funding has been provided to support Welsh-medium childcare qualifications, on an ongoing basis, for 100 Level 3 and 50 Level 5 learners via the Cam wrth Gam programme. Mudiad Meithrin manages the 22 assessors and tutors with the qualifications, competencies and language skills necessary to deliver the new set of qualifications.

## **What are we going to do?**

- The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill was passed by Senedd Cymru on 13 May. Following Royal Assent, the Welsh Government will implement the provisions of the Act.

- The first task will be for the Welsh Ministers to prepare a Code to establish one standard method to describe Welsh language ability based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (the CEFR).
- This will help individuals, including learners, teachers, parents and employers to clearly understand what users of the Welsh language can do at every stage of their language journey.
- The aim by 2050 is for school pupils to leave statutory education as independent and confident Welsh speakers – regardless of the language category of the school they have attended. We want all pupils, by 2050, to have oral skills at level B2 at least of the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR).
- We aim to consult on the new Code in the autumn.
- We will also undertake work to prepare the National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh which will, amongst other things, include targets for local authorities in relation to increasing the number of pupils of compulsory school age receiving education in “Primarily Welsh Language” category schools.

## **12. Community-based language planning**

### **Summary of the Community-based language chapter:**

In their chapter on community-based language planning [Recommendation 50–57], the Commission highlights the importance of community-based language planning as a means of influencing the interpersonal use of Welsh and to create a stronger foundation for the language to flourish. To ensure that this happens purposefully, energetic community-based language planning is needed which is supported by public policy, sufficient resources and the need to be innovative. To ensure the successful application of language planning principles at a community level, the Commission stated that current interventions should be re-prioritised and redesigned with additional resources provided by the Welsh Government to allow this to happen.

The Commission recommended that Welsh Language Standards, under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, should be amended so that a new requirement is placed under the 'Promotion Standards' to ensure effective community language planning in areas of higher density linguistic significance [Recommendation 51]. There is also a need for better data which could be valuable to understand the linguistic needs of the community, as well data on a range of matters such as skills, attitude, confidence and language use.

The intergenerational transmission of Welsh is vital for the survival of the language. Supporting children and young people to use Welsh socially is essential and the work undertaken by the mentrau iaith, the Urdd and the Young Farmers' Clubs movement for example is important to create social opportunities. The Commission also believes that sport governing bodies have a role to encourage further use of the Welsh language amongst children and young people.

We have a range of community language planning organisations, which have an important contribution to support the language at a community level. These organisations often work in partnership with a wide range of community groups, agencies and public authorities. The Commission recommends that more resources should be provided to these organisations to ensure they have the necessary capacity to respond to the linguistic needs of communities. The Compendium included within the Commission's report highlighted that language shift is happening in areas that were considered relatively safe centres of language use. The Commission therefore recommends that a pilot should be held in a housing estate in north-west Wales by bringing together key stakeholders, including support agencies, community-based language planners and further education organisations to help develop interventions that can reverse the recent linguistic trends.

### **Welsh Government response:**

The Welsh Government fully understands and agrees with the Commission in regard to the importance of community-based language planning. We already invest in a range of organisations that work in this field and value their contribution and dedication. The Welsh Government agrees that effective place-based plans are designed to be collaborative focusing on the specific



needs and issues of clearly defined geographical area. The Welsh Government agrees that community-based language planning is an intrinsic part of the approach in areas of higher density linguistic significance [Recommendation 50].

The Welsh Government agrees to develop a framework to measure the impact of community-based language planning in collaboration with key stakeholders. We have already created a measuring results toolkit in partnership with the mentrau iaith and will undertake further work to develop the toolkit. We also agree that language transmission both within the household and socialisation outside the family is vital to community-based language planning [Recommendation 52].

The Welsh Government also agrees that supporting children and young people to use Welsh with confidence is central to community-based language planning and will continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders including local authorities [Recommendation 53].

The Welsh Government also recognise the role of sport clubs at a community level. The recommendation by the Commission is for the attention of sport governing bodies. Sport Wales works in partnership with the Welsh Language Commissioner to support and encourage national organisations in the sports sector, including National Governing Bodies, to extend their Welsh language offers. Sport Wales sees this work as an important part of its Welsh language duties, as a public body for itself, and through encouraging the development and promotion of more opportunities to use the Welsh language to play sport in the wider sector. There isn't one source of data available to collect the linguistic competence of coaches and to establish one would be cost prohibitive [Recommendation 55].

The Welsh Government agrees to hold a pilot in a social housing estate in the north-west in partnership with key stakeholders [Recommendation 57].

## **What are we doing?**

- We are committed to place-based approaches, and this is central theme to our vision for community development.
- We are The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill places a duty on Welsh Ministers to review the Welsh Language Standards which are specified under section 26 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 in order to consider whether the Promotion Standards need to be amended. The Bill recognises the contribution of these standards to the achievement of the targets in Part 1 of the Bill, which will include targets for increasing the use of the Welsh language socially. There will be a specific opportunity as part of the review of Promotion Standards to consider how local authorities can ensure that the targets set out in Part 1 of the Bill can be taken into account when formulating their promotion strategies. This will ensure that strategies are aligned with the requirements of the Bill and contribute to achieving its aims, helping to ensure a positive impact on the use of the Welsh language, including socially. [Recommendation 51]

- A number of grant recipients working within the community-based language planning field have received a minimum increase of 5% in their funding for the 2025-26 financial year. Moreover, the young farmers clubs, Mudiad Meithrin, Merched y Wawr and some of the mentrau iaith have each received additional funding in excess of 5%. The grant increase aims to support language planning at a community level. The mentrau iaith are one of our key grant recipients that focus on community-based language planning and were established by communities to develop novel initiatives that support Welsh as a community language. We will also work closely and further encourage the mentrau iaith to seek funding opportunities within the socio-economic sector.

## **What are we going to do?**

- We will work with Mentrau Iaith Cymru and other key stakeholders to update the measuring results toolkit in order to develop a framework to measure the impact of community-based language planning interventions. [Recommendation 52].
- The Welsh Government is in the process of piloting research-based language transmission interventions which draws on behavioural science methodologies to help parents and families use more Welsh with their children. [Recommendation 53].
- The Welsh Government's Welsh Language Implementation Participation Group, part of the Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board, will conclude its work in September 2025. However, we will continue to engage with these groups as well as other relevant groups thereafter. In addition to working with local authorities, the Welsh Government will collaborate with the voluntary youth sector to strengthen its community language planning capability [Recommendation 54].
- As set out under Recommendation 20, the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill makes clear that the review of standards required by the Bill must be completed within a 12-month period starting the day following the publication of the Code to describe Welsh language ability. It is considered that it would be premature to amend standard 145 before undertaking this review. As set out under Recommendation 20 above, we will consider the appropriateness of the proposed wording if the review of Promotion Standards suggests that standard 145 needs to be amended [Recommendation 51].
- Discussions with relevant stakeholders are currently taking place and we will, in cooperation with these partners, announce more detail about the location of the proposed pilot in the near future. By introducing the pilot, we will work with a wide range of stakeholders, including public authorities, support agencies and third sector organisations including our *Cymraeg 2050* grant recipients. The ambition is for the pilot project to be fully owned by the local community which better understand the social, economic and linguistic needs of the area [Recommendation 57].

## Annex 1: List of recommendations

### Recommendation:

#### General principles

**Recommendation 1:** Welsh is a national language that belongs to everyone in Wales as well as to its speakers in the rest of the world. To strengthen Welsh as a living national language, it needs to be strengthened as a community language. Welsh-speaking communities should be empowered, and the sustainability of the Welsh language strengthened in Welsh-speaking communities, and public policy should fully reflect these aims.

#### Areas of higher density linguistic significance

**Recommendation 2:** The Welsh Government should designate 'areas of higher density linguistic significance' in Wales.

**Recommendation 3:** Areas of higher density linguistic significance should:

- increase consideration of the Welsh language within a policy framework.
- allow policy intervention, variation and emphasis in favour of Welsh as a community language.
- ensure that policy variations respond to the social and linguistic needs of these areas.
- provide the necessary capacity to empower communities to reverse language shift.

**Recommendation 4:** The designation of areas of higher density linguistic significance should not prevent universal provision (effective throughout the territory of Wales) being made for the Welsh language in some policy fields. In such cases, there should be no requirement to vary national policy.

**Recommendation 5:** An area should be designated as an area of higher density linguistic significance if the percentage of speakers in the area is equal to or greater than a national threshold set by the Welsh Government. In addition, local authorities should have discretion to designate an area as one of higher density linguistic significance if an area borders on such an area, or on the basis of the density of Welsh speakers as a percentage of its population.

Provision should be made for the designation of areas of higher density linguistic significance as follows:

#### 'Areas of higher density linguistic significance'

- (1) A local authority has a duty to designate an area within its area as one of higher density linguistic significance if the percentage of Welsh speakers within that area is equal to or greater than X%.
- (2) A local authority may also designate another area within its area as one of higher density linguistic significance:
  - (a) if it adjoins an area designated in accordance with subsection (1) above.

- (b) if it considers that it should do that based on the density of Welsh speakers in that area as a percentage of its population, even if that percentage is below X%.
- (3) In exercising their functions, Welsh Ministers and local authorities must pay special attention to the viability of the Welsh language within areas of higher density linguistic significance.
- (4) A local authority has a duty to collaborate with other local authorities by sharing expertise and knowledge relevant to their duties and powers under this section.

**Recommendation 6:** There should be a presumption in favour of designating X% (the threshold mentioned in recommendation 5) as 40%. The Welsh Government should make the final decision on X% following the publication of further findings from *Prosiect BRO*'s research, also taking into account the views of other academics and statisticians and having consulted with stakeholders including local authorities.

**Recommendation 7:** The Welsh Government should introduce new primary legislation to establish the framework for designating areas of higher density linguistic significance. The percentage commensurate with X% (i.e. the threshold mentioned in recommendation 5), and the definition of an 'area', could be specified in regulations.

**Recommendation 8:** A unit should be established within the Welsh Government to develop and co-ordinate public policy relevant to areas of higher density linguistic significance. A council or panel of experts that possess skills and experience in various relevant policy fields (such as the economy, housing, community development etc) should be established to advise the unit.

## **Economy**

**Recommendation 9:** The Welsh Government should ensure that an economic development strategy, specifically tailored to the economic needs of areas of higher density linguistic significance, is formulated and implemented. The strategy should add value to existing economic policy by promoting additional approaches to economic development, including prioritising policies and activity that will provide for the foundational needs of the population and household well-being (including improving service infrastructure, social infrastructure, residual income, and effective language planning).

**Recommendation 10:** The Welsh Government should offer additional support to community initiatives and businesses in order to strengthen Welsh as a community language in areas of higher density linguistic significance, including:

- support to develop the skills necessary for growing, sustaining and managing larger scale enterprises.
- facilitating access to assets and funding sources.
- support to develop networks and processes for developing partnerships.

- further support for communities and workforces to buy or own a portion of businesses in the community that are up for sale.

**Recommendation 11:** The Welsh Government should ensure that the Welsh language is a central consideration in agricultural policy. There should be support for the family farm, and the principle of the importance of the family farm should be reflected in other policies such as environmental policy.

**Recommendation 12:** The Welsh Government should develop a plan that prioritises community benefit and sustainable activity within the visitor economy sector as well as the viability of the Welsh language. In addition, the principles of *Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy 2035* should be considered by other local authorities and national parks.

**Recommendation 13:** Health boards and universities should adopt and increase the number of schemes that promote local employment. Individuals should be offered flexible access to training courses and career pathways throughout their careers. Good practice should be shared to support similar developments in other parts of the public sector.

**Recommendation 14:** The Welsh Government, local authorities and relevant public bodies should ensure that public spending, through grants and the procurement process, guarantees household well-being in local communities, social value, and that opportunities are created to increase the use of Welsh. The aim should be to increase the capacity and development of indigenous businesses.

When feasibly possible, therefore, public funding in areas of higher density linguistic significance should:

- support Welsh language use and acquisition processes.
- support procurement processes and local supply chains.
- ensure community benefit.
- create or maintain Welsh language spaces.
- properly contribute to a 'sense of place'.
- seek, within some economic models, to maximize the business' involvement with, or ownership by, the local community and workforce.

**Recommendation 15:** In order to address out-migration of young people from areas of higher density linguistic significance, the Welsh Government should ensure that:

- information and data are collected regularly about young people and mobility in areas of higher density linguistic significance.
- research is commissioned to deepen understanding of specific issues such as who moves, from where, to where, when and why; what support might motivate people to stay or return; how to target and attract people most likely to support the economy and language in areas of higher density linguistic significance; and how to help and welcome other Welsh speakers to settle there.
- an ongoing communication and support plan is developed to incentivise young people to stay, return or settle. The plan should be based on further data and research about young people's aspirations

and decisions, developing a positive narrative, and aligning with labour market needs as well as young people's priorities and aspirations. The Welsh Government should place responsibility on a single body to deliver and co-ordinate this.

**Recommendation 16:** The Welsh Government should establish a body to lead and co-ordinate a range of activity in relation to economic development and the Welsh language within areas of higher density linguistic significance. Its boundaries would therefore extend beyond the four current counties of the ARFOR programme. The body should have expertise in language planning and economic development.

The terms of reference for this body should include responsibilities for:

- developing a range of economic development policies or strategies in the context of areas of higher density linguistic significance.
- mainstreaming economic policies in relation to areas of higher density linguistic significance.
- influencing wider economic development structures.
- developing partnerships and sharing capacity and expertise on the ground.
- developing understanding of the relationship between the economy and the Welsh language.
- leading and co-ordinating efforts to attract young people to stay, return or settle in areas of higher density linguistic significance in order to stimulate enterprise and counteract depopulation.

This body should take the form of one of the following two options:

Option 1: In this option, ARFOR, or a body similar to ARFOR, would be established as a permanent incorporated entity that would have its own executive. Local authorities would be represented on its board, but the body would be independent of individual local authorities. Its capacity could also be strengthened by transferring to it a portion of mainstream programme funding available for regional economic development. Such a body would be a suitable vehicle for achieving the above objectives without unduly disrupting the fabric of existing economic development structures.

Option 2: In this option, the body would be a higher-level entity, creating an economic development agency for the west. It would be organised through a board of local authority and Welsh Government representatives to ensure consistency and joint strategic planning. Funding and resources from mainstream Welsh Government programmes that promote economic development regionally could be transferred to it. Transferring additional economic development functions could be considered, to further strengthen its capacity.

In the context of Option 2, it would be best to avoid a situation where economic, town and country planning, and transport policies were developed separately according to different timeframes. Requirements could therefore be placed on local authorities to consult with this new body in those areas. Corporate Joint Committees could also be required to consult with the body as they develop Strategic Development Plans and Regional Transport Plans.

**Recommendation 17:** The Welsh Government should establish a Centre of Excellence to develop a better understanding of the interrelationship between the economy and the Welsh language. The centre should co-ordinate and develop a strategic research and data programme to support wider policy work in regard to the economy. The centre could be located within the body outlined in recommendation 16.

## **Welsh language workplaces**

**Recommendation 18:** Public sector organisations should use a common framework for measuring proficiency in Welsh to support the improvement of Welsh language skills within the workforce, and as part of the recruitment process. This framework should be based on the CEFR.

**Recommendation 19:** Leaders of public bodies in Wales should follow the course, 'Leading in a Bilingual Country'. Academi Cymru should also develop a 'Leading in a Welsh-speaking Community' course suitable for leaders of organisations and workplaces in areas of higher density linguistic significance. Such a course could also be useful for community, third sector and private sector leaders in those areas.

**Recommendation 20:** The Welsh Government should use Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 standards to ensure that public sector organisations subject to the Measure in areas of higher density linguistic significance state the extent of their use of Welsh as an internal language, as well as the steps they will take to move the organisation concerned along a language continuum within a given timeframe.

## **Community development**

**Recommendation 21:** The Welsh Government should devise and support a programme to disseminate successful community development models across areas of higher density linguistic significance by drawing on existing local expertise and good practice. Successful models could also be implemented in other parts of Wales.

**Recommendation 22:** The Welsh Government and other relevant funding bodies should change the current system of awarding financial support to community organisations and groups so that they can develop medium-term and longer-term projects. Most importantly, the lifespan of existing grants should be extended from one to three years to ensure the longevity and success of schemes.

**Recommendation 23:** The Welsh Government should invest financially in community initiatives within areas of higher density linguistic significance by providing them with grants and/or long-term loans at preferential rates. To ensure that the process of transferring assets to the community is beneficial to the Welsh language, conditions and requirements should be placed on grants and/or loans so that Welsh language social capital is central to any scheme.

**Recommendation 24:** The Welsh Government should offer to help community groups develop a network/s that can support them assess and increase

competence and capacity in their respective areas of activity, and share good practice and expertise across the network.

## Housing

**Recommendation 25:** The Welsh Government should ensure that the Local Housing Market Assessment guidance and template include criteria relating to the Welsh language.

**Recommendation 26:** Local authorities should ensure that all schemes in the Social Housing Prospectus contain evidence of local housing need. A community assessment of housing need should be carried out every five years based on community council or town council areas. The process should be led by the Rural Housing Enablers.

**Recommendation 27:** The Welsh Government should ensure flexibility in the social housing grant formula, as well as in any other relevant grant, in order to facilitate small-scale development sites in rural areas within areas of higher density linguistic significance. This should ensure that these homes are affordable to develop, adhering to the Welsh Government's Standard Viability Models.

**Recommendation 28:** The Welsh Government should make the *Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan* permanent. It should operate within areas of higher density linguistic significance.

**Recommendation 29:** The Welsh Government should ensure that the evaluation of the *Dwyfor second homes and affordability pilot* fully considers the impact on the Welsh language. If appropriate, interventions trialled in the Dwyfor pilot should be introduced in other areas of higher density linguistic significance.

**Recommendation 30:** Planning authorities introducing an Article 4 Direction should undertake regular evaluation to monitor any unintended consequences on the Welsh language and on the housing market.

**Recommendation 31:** The Welsh Government should establish a dedicated loan fund offering low interest loans, or equity in schemes, to support community enterprises to purchase land or property to develop community-led housing developments.

**Recommendation 32:** In responding to local housing need, local authorities should make better use of the housing stock and vacant properties. Town centre regeneration policies should be interwoven with housing policies, and as a feature of that, conditions on grants or loans should include Welsh language considerations.

**Recommendation 33:** Local authorities and planning authorities should consider whether models can be developed for the letting of social housing or in drawing up Section 106 agreements, where the Welsh language may be one positive consideration alongside other considerations. Any model should



be scrutinised to ensure there is no unacceptable disadvantage to the non-Welsh-speaking population, and to ensure compliance with relevant equality legislation.

**Recommendation 34:** The Welsh Government should discuss with mortgage providers how to improve competition within mortgage provision for restricted properties. A framework should be established which measures the number of borrowers offering mortgages on restricted properties, and the interest rates offered in comparison to interest rates offered on unrestricted properties.

## **Town and Country Planning**

**Recommendation 35:** The Welsh Government should make changes to town and country planning policies and guidance in order to strengthen the relationship with sustainability objectives in regard to the Welsh language, and in particular in the context of community linguistic sustainability. Some of the changes should lead to new policies and approaches that will be operational within areas of higher density linguistic significance, and others to policies and approaches that will be operational throughout Wales.

The Commission recommends that changes be made in the following areas:

- The Welsh Government should ensure that *Planning Policy Wales* provides better guidance in relation to principles of sustainable development regarding the Welsh language, and in particular, the long-term sustainability of areas of higher density linguistic significance.
- The Welsh Government should review *TAN 20* in order to strengthen the guidance and advice given to planning authorities as they prepare development plans and make decisions about planning permission.
- The Welsh Government should review the *Development Plans Manual* so that better guidance can be provided in relation to the sustainability of the Welsh language, and in particular the long-term sustainability of areas of higher density linguistic significance, as planning authorities produce Integrated Sustainability Appraisals.
- The Welsh Government should work with the Royal Town Planning Institute, language planners and universities to review higher education provision to ensure that practitioners, graduates and students have appropriate language planning skill sets with regard to town and country planning.

The Commission will make its recommendations in full in a dedicated report by December 2024.

## **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

**Recommendation 36:** The Welsh Government should undertake a study of intersections in Census 2021 data between the ability to speak Welsh and relevant protected characteristics. The study should include more detail than that available at local authority level alone, and if it is possible to do so, it should include an analysis at MSOA level, or by combining LSOAs.

**Recommendation 37:** The Welsh Government should establish a task and finish group to examine issues of equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to the Welsh language. The group should give full consideration to these issues

in the context of Welsh as a community language and in areas of higher density linguistic significance. Appropriate consideration should also be given to rurality.

### **Welsh-medium education**

**Recommendation 38:** Upon completing statutory education, all children in areas of higher density linguistic significance should be confident and literate in both oral and written Welsh, and this should be reflected in public policy.

**Recommendation 39:** An aim should be set that, within areas of higher density linguistic significance, all schools should in the fullness of time offer inclusive Welsh-medium education to enable all pupils from all backgrounds to acquire Welsh confidently and become literate in it.

**Recommendation 40:** Within areas of higher density linguistic significance, local authorities should encourage and support all non-maintained nursery settings and play groups to use Welsh language provision in early education, Flying Start and the Childcare Offer. There should be investment in the workforce to achieve the goal.

**Recommendation 41:** In areas of higher density linguistic significance, the intention should be that primary schools are Welsh-medium schools, and that schools in the secondary sector should be Welsh-medium schools (category 3) or Designated Welsh-medium schools (category 3P), except in the case of schools named by local authorities for exceptional reasons. If schools are not currently in these categories, they should be so within a reasonable period.

**Recommendation 42:** Within areas of higher density linguistic significance, local authorities in conjunction with schools should, within the boundaries of their language-medium category, determine the percentage of Welsh-medium provision that pupils are expected to receive within particular schools. This percentage should be ambitious enough to increase the Welsh-medium provision.

**Recommendation 43:** Detailed data regarding Welsh-medium provision within areas of higher density linguistic significance should be published. Local authorities should publish data with regard to the baseline of the language category of schools, and also measure how many and what percentage of children receive 50% and 70% of their education through the medium of Welsh. Local authorities should publish such data for all schools (and should also publish the authority-wide data in their WESP).

**Recommendation 44:** Estyn should develop supplementary inspection guidance for inspecting Welsh-medium provision in areas of higher density linguistic significance, including as the language of post-14 and post-16 education. It should also look at the percentage studying post-14 and post-16 qualifications through the medium of Welsh.

**Recommendation 45:** Working with local authorities, Estyn should formally inspect progress in Welsh-medium provision against the aims of Welsh in

Education Strategic Plans every two years, submitting their conclusions to the local authority Cabinet.

**Recommendation 46:** Voluntary and foundation schools should follow national and local authority policies in regard to Welsh-medium provision.

**Recommendation 47:** The Welsh Government should place a duty on local authorities to evaluate the extra-curricular and social use of Welsh, including the effectiveness of the *Siarter Iaith* in primary and secondary schools, and to report on this on an annual basis. Estyn should inspect the operation of the *Siarter Iaith* within the wider context of the school.

**Recommendation 48:** The Welsh Government and local authorities should ensure that Welsh language immersion centres receive sufficient resources to achieve their aims.

**Recommendation 49:** Within areas of higher density linguistic significance, the Welsh Government should plan to meet the needs of the education workforce, ensuring that staff are confident as plans are put in place to increase Welsh-medium provision in schools.

### **Community-based language planning**

**Recommendation 50:** The Welsh Government should ensure a commitment to community-based language planning in all its community-related strategies within areas of higher density linguistic significance. Similarly, local authority corporate plans, Public Service Boards' well-being plans and relevant strategic programmes prepared by Corporate Joint Committees should give due regard to the importance of community-based language planning in areas of higher density linguistic significance and provide adequate resources to it.

**Recommendation 51:** Standard 145 within Schedule 4 to the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 should include a further obligation in addition to those stated at (a) and (b). (c) would relate to areas of higher density linguistic significance and should read as follows:

(c) [the strategy must include] a document detailing how specific and appropriate provision for areas of higher density linguistic significance is made in your area, with particular emphasis on strengthening and increasing the use of Welsh as a community language.

**Recommendation 52:** The Welsh Government should, in collaboration with academic researchers and stakeholders, develop a framework to measure the impact of community-based language planning in areas of higher density linguistic significance.

**Recommendation 53:** The Welsh Government and local authorities should ensure that language transmission, both in the household and in the form of language socialisation outside the family, is central to community-based language planning. Appropriate evidence (including international evidence), behavioural sciences, and best practice in related fields such as parental

literacy, and the encouragement of reading between parent and child, should be examined. There should also be research into how to benefit as fully as possible from the connection between parents and the health sector in order to convey positive messages about the Welsh language.

**Recommendation 54:** The Welsh Government and local authorities should ensure that supporting children and young people to use Welsh with confidence is central to community-based language planning. This should be jointly planned at local authority level with input from the Welsh Language Implementation Participation Group of the Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board. As a central part of this, relevant organisations should ensure the continuation and development of language planning at the micro level.

**Recommendation 55:** Sports governing bodies should require sports clubs (or in cases where this is not possible offer guidance) to encourage further use of Welsh in areas of higher density linguistic significance, including developing plans to qualify more Welsh-speaking coaches. Data should be collected about the language skills of coaches.

**Recommendation 56:** The Welsh Government should increase the resources available to organisations that work in the field of community-based language planning to ensure they have the necessary capacity to respond to the linguistic needs of communities. Any new funding should be based on criteria relating to reversing language shift at a community level.

**Recommendation 57:** A pilot should be held on a social housing estate in a town in north-west Wales. The pilot should be co-ordinated by a social landlord in consultation with the community and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders including a range of community-based language planning organisations. The aim of the pilot would be to trial interventions to try and reverse language shift on the housing estate.