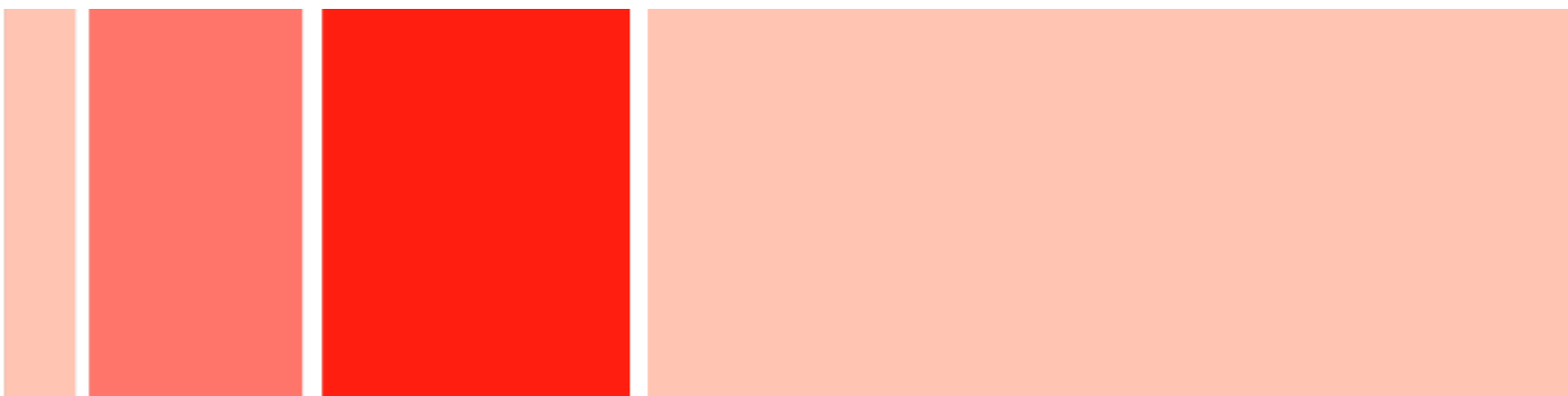


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Evaluation of the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot: Phase 2 2024-2025



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Evaluation of the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot: Phase 2 2024-2025

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

The information contained in this report is based on data available up to 3rd October 2025. Any developments, changes, or new information that may have occurred after this date are not reflected in this document.

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Glossary

Chargeable empty homes – A chargeable empty home is a residential property that is unoccupied (not lived in as a primary residence) and substantially unfurnished. Empty homes are subject to council tax, meaning they are considered chargeable properties. For council tax purposes, properties both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least one year may become subject to additional council tax premiums.

Chargeable second homes – A second home is a residential property not being used or not intended to be used as the owner's main residence. It is occupied by the owners and guests on a non-commercial basis, generally for 182 days or fewer in any 12-month period. For council tax purposes, a second home is defined as a dwelling that is not a person's sole or main home, is substantially furnished, and is used periodically. Second homes are subject to council tax, meaning they are considered chargeable properties.

Intermediary housing stock – Housing that costs more than social housing but less than that sold in the private housing market.

LA – Local Authority

LDP – Local Development Plan

LSOA – Lower Layer Super Output Area

MSOA – Middle Layer Super Output Area

Self-catering holiday units – Holiday units with cooking facilities available so that occupants can cook meals for themselves rather than having them provided.

Short-term lets – Short-term lets are defined under planning regulations as dwelling houses used for commercial short-term letting, where each period of occupation is no longer than 31 days.

1. Introduction and background

1.1. Housing affordability

Housing affordability continues to be a critical issue in Wales. Recent figures suggest a modest improvement in certain metrics, though challenges remain. According to the latest [UK House Price Index data](#), the average property price in Wales stood at £209,000 as of July 2025, up from £205,000 in July 2024. Looking back, [house prices in Wales](#) increased sharply between July 2020 and July 2022, with annual growth of 10% and 15% respectively, averaging 13% over the two years. This was followed by a period of stability between July 2022 and July 2023, when no increase was recorded. Since then, prices have risen more moderately, with a 1% increase between July 2023 and July 2024, and a further 2% in the most recent year.

Housing prices are strongly dependent on housing supply. In 2024/25, 3,798 new dwellings were completed. By comparison, annual completions consistently ranged from 4,300 to 5,200 units between 2020/21 and 2023/24 ([StatsWales](#)).

In terms of [housing affordability](#), in 2024, full-time employees in Wales required 5.9 times their annual income to buy a home, [a marginal improvement from 6.1 times in 2023](#), though this change was not statistically significant. Further, this is still above the ONS affordability threshold of 5.0, suggesting that affordability pressures remain ^[Footnote1].

In the private rental sector, affordability continues to tighten. As of August 2025, [the average rent in Wales](#) reached £811 per month, representing a 7.8% increase (£59) compared to a year earlier. While this annual rise is almost similar to the 7.9% increase between July 2024 and July 2025, and below the record 9.9% increase in November 2023, rental growth remains historically high. Persistent inflation since 2021 continues to weigh heavily on tenants, intensifying the overall housing affordability crisis.

1.2. Second homes, empty properties, and short-term lets in Gwynedd

The [number of chargeable second homes](#) in Wales rose to 24,000 in 2025/26, compared to 22,000 in 2024/25. This reverses the previous year's decline and returns totals closer to the 24,000 level seen consistently between 2019/20 and 2023/24. [Empty properties](#) remained broadly unchanged at 22,560 in 2025/26, compared with 22,630 in 2024/25.

Footnote

[1] According to [Office for National Statistics, 2025. Housing affordability in England and Wales: 2024](#), the Office for National Statistics use a threshold of five years of income as a broad indicator of affordability. Further definitions and sources can be found in [Office for National Statistics, 2025. Housing affordability in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) report](#).

The [distribution of chargeable second homes](#) across Wales shows a clear geographical pattern. Numbers are highest in the west and in coastal areas with strong tourism economies. Gwynedd continues to record the largest total, with 4,600 in 2025/26, followed by Pembrokeshire (3,900), Cardiff (3,400), and the Isle of Anglesey (2,000). Cardiff stands out as an exception to the coastal pattern, with a comparatively high number of second homes for an urban centre. [Other authorities](#) with relatively high concentrations include Conwy (1,470), Ceredigion (1,420), Powys (1,400), and Swansea (1,570). By contrast, second homes are far less common in the post-industrial Valleys and in parts of northeast Wales. [Several local authorities](#) report only a few hundred chargeable properties, while Blaenau Gwent records none. Bridgend (60), Torfaen (12), and Wrexham (22) also report minimal numbers.

In Gwynedd, [chargeable second home numbers](#) have fluctuated over recent years, peaking at 5,100 in 2021/22, then declining steadily until 2024/25, before increasing again slightly back to above 4,400 in 2025/26. Regarding self-catering units, partner delivery sources (not publicly accessible) estimate that approximately 2,000 self-catering units were liable for non-domestic rates [\[Footnote 2\]](#) on 1st July 2025, down from 2,800 units at the start of 2024. However, community-level patterns remain uneven, as also noted by [Alma Economics \(2025\)](#) in the Phase 1 report of the Evaluation of the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot, which is discussed further below.

According to July 2025 data on second homes and self-catering holiday units liable for non-domestic rates from partner delivery sources (not publicly accessible), certain communities in Gwynedd continue to have a high concentration of these properties. Llanengan has 751 second homes [\[Footnote 3\]](#) and 128 self-catering units, or 49% of all dwellings, while Beddgelert has 63 second homes and 64 self-catering units, equivalent to 34% of total dwellings. In contrast, Caernarfon records 60 second homes and 33 holiday units (1.94%), and Bangor 97 second homes and 16 holiday units (1.72%), showing that some areas remain largely unaffected. Compared with January 2024, the proportion of second homes and self-catering units has increased slightly in Llanengan, while the situation in Bangor and Caernarfon has stayed broadly the same ([Alma Economics, 2025](#)). This uneven distribution continues to create highly localised pressures on housing, a pattern previously highlighted by [Brooks \(2021\)](#).

In terms of [chargeable empty properties](#), Gwynedd was estimated to have 1,510 in 2025/26, up from 1,460 in 2024/25, placing it among the top five Local Authorities (LAs) in Wales.

Footnotes

[\[2\]](#) Properties liable for non-domestic rates include self-catering or other short-term let accommodation. The number of self-catering units liable for non-domestic rates is therefore used as a proxy for the scale of short-term letting in the area.

[\[3\]](#) Second homes include properties with Class A restrictions on occupation, Class B properties (currently not subject to a premium), and second homes with a premium.

1.3. Affordability in Gwynedd

The [average house price in Gwynedd](#) was £198,000 in July 2025, up 3.3% from July 2024, higher than the 2.0% increase across Wales over the same period. Since July 2020, prices have fluctuated, with periods of rapid growth and occasional declines. For example, [annual average house price growth](#) was 11.4% in July 2021, 11.7% in July 2022, followed by declines of 1.5% in July 2023 and 1.8% in July 2024, before rising again by 3.3% in the most recent year.

In the private rental market, the [average rent in Gwynedd](#) was £677 in the year to August 2025, broadly unchanged from £678 in August 2024 (a 0.2% decrease). In contrast, the average rent across Wales rose by 7.8% over the same period.

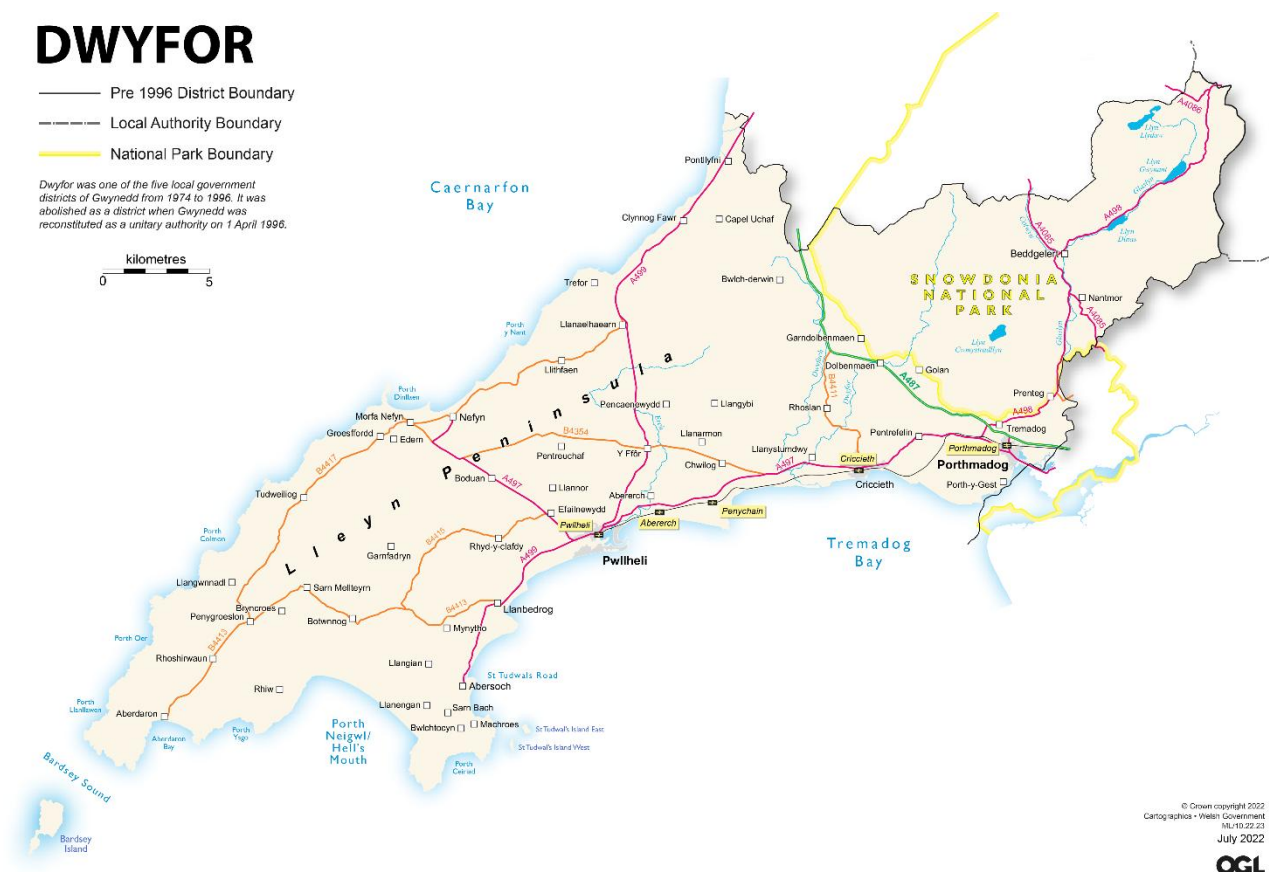
1.4. Second Homes and Affordability Pilot

The Second Homes and Affordability Pilot was announced by the Welsh Government in June 2022 for the Dwyfor area of Gwynedd. The Pilot aims to test strategies to manage second homes, empty properties, and short-term lets, while improving housing affordability for local residents ([Welsh Government, 2022a](#)). It also explores ways to support local fiscal tools, ensure second-home owners contribute to local communities, and safeguard the Welsh language. Dwyfor was chosen due to its size, the concentration of second homes, and the impact of second homes on the Welsh language ([Welsh Government, 2024a](#)).

1.4.1. Prevalence of second homes, empty properties, and short-term lets in Dwyfor

Dwyfor stretches from the Llŷn Peninsula to the area west of Porthmadog ([Welsh Government, 2024a](#)). According to non-public information provided by delivery partners, there were approximately 15,411 domestic properties in Dwyfor on 1st July 2025. Council tax records indicate 2,355 second homes, accounting for 15% of all domestic properties. The number of empty homes was 427 on 31st December 2024, or 2.8% of the total domestic properties. Self-catering accommodations liable for non-domestic rates were estimated at 720 on 1st July 2025, representing 4.5% of the total housing stock (domestic and non-domestic properties combined).

Figure 1: Map of Dwyfor



Source: Cartographics – Welsh Government, July 2022

At the beginning of 2024, council tax records from delivery partners indicated around 2,000 second homes in Dwyfor (13% of all domestic properties), 500 empty homes (3% of all domestic properties), and an estimated 1,000 self-catering units liable for non-domestic rates (around 6% of total domestic and non-domestic properties) ([Alma Economics, 2025](#)).

Compared with 2024, these figures show a slight increase in second homes, a small decrease in empty homes, and a reduction in self-catering units, indicating ongoing changes in the housing composition in Dwyfor and highlighting the continuing relevance of the Pilot programme in addressing affordability pressures ([Alma Economics, 2025](#)).

1.4.2. Affordability in Dwyfor

For the purposes of this research, Dwyfor is defined in alignment with the Phase 1 evaluation ([Alma Economics, 2025](#)) as five Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) within Gwynedd [[Footnote 4](#)]. Historically, Dwyfor was one of the five local government districts of Cyngor Gwynedd until 1996, and it continues to function as an area committee.

Footnote

[4] The 5 MSOAs that are used to define the Dwyfor are the following: W02000017, W02000019, W02000020, W02000021, and W02000023.

It comprises 17 communities – Llanengan, Llanbedrog, Aberdaron, Nefyn, Beddgelert, Tudweiliog, Porthmadog, Pistyll, Buan, Criccieth, Clynog, Dolbenmaen, Llanaelhaearn, Botwnnog, Llanystumdwy, Pwllheli, and Llannor – which align with 17 output areas used in the construction of Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs), MSOAs, and LAs. Defining Dwyfor by MSOAs ensures consistency with Phase 1 and provides a clear geographical framework for analysing housing affordability across the area.

Housing affordability in Dwyfor is measured using two approaches. The OECD definition ([OECD, 2021](#)) calculates affordability as the ratio of house prices to household income, where income includes total earnings, benefits, and pensions, as defined by the [Office for National Statistics \(2019\)](#). The [Office for National Statistics definition \(2025\)](#) calculates affordability as house prices divided by annual workplace earnings from employment only.

Using the OECD definition, analysis of the [2023 HM Land Registry Price Paid Data](#) and 2023 household income data from CACI [\[Footnote 5\]](#) indicated a median house price of £219,000 and a median household income of £33,000, giving a housing affordability ratio of 6.60, indicating that the median house price was 6.60 times the median annual income in Dwyfor in 2023. In 2024, the median house price fell slightly to £215,000, while median household income rose to £36,300, producing a ratio of 5.92, reflecting a modest improvement in affordability.

Similar issues are highlighted using the [Office for National Statistics definition \(2025\)](#). According to the [Office for National Statistics \(2024\)](#) and using the 2023 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Workplace Earnings [\[Footnote 6,7\]](#), the median gross annual workplace earnings in Dwyfor were approximately £28,000 in 2023, resulting in a housing affordability ratio of 7.80, meaning the median house price is 7.80 times the median annual workplace earnings. In 2024, using the [2024 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Workplace Earnings](#), the median gross annual workplace earnings increased to £29,700, with the corresponding affordability ratio decreasing to 7.24. Although this indicates a slight improvement in affordability, the ratio remains significantly above the [Office for National Statistics \(2024\)](#) threshold of 5, highlighting that local residents continue to face substantial challenges in purchasing a median-priced home. In practical terms, without accounting for taxes or living expenses, it would take over seven years of gross income to purchase a home at the median price in Dwyfor.

Footnotes

[\[5\]](#) CACI data does not distinguish between full-time and part-time income, which may impact the calculated average.

[\[6\]](#) The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Workplace Earnings data was available at the Westminster Parliamentary Constituency level (Dwyfor Meirionnydd), which may differ from the Dwyfor definition used to calculate the median price paid from HM Land Registry Price Paid Data, where the borders of Dwyfor were defined based on Output Areas.

[\[7\]](#) The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Workplace Earnings data provides information on the earnings of employees in all industries and occupations. It does not provide information on self-employed individuals.

While the figures presented reflect the median for Dwyfor as a whole, there are likely substantial variations in house prices and affordability across smaller communities within the area. These local differences will be examined in more detail in next year's evaluation.

Rental affordability also saw a modest improvement. Based on 2023 figures on rents from Rightmove and 2023 income data from CACI, the median monthly rent was £700, with a median monthly household income of £2,750 [\[Footnote 8\]](#), producing a rent-to-income ratio of 25.4%. In 2024, the median rent rose to £750, but the median monthly household income increased to £3,025 [\[Footnote 9\]](#), reducing the rent-to-income ratio to 24.8%. While rents fall below the Welsh Government's 30% threshold for rental affordability [\(Welsh Government, 2011\)](#), affordability remains a concern when considered alongside broader cost-of-living pressures. Caveats remain, including the absence of service charge data and potential differences between the median incomes of the general population and private rental households.

1.5. Evaluation of the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot

The launch of the Pilot aligns with the Welsh Government's ongoing efforts to enhance housing affordability and adequacy [\(Welsh Government, 2023a\)](#). In recent years, the Government has introduced a range of measures to address challenges from high numbers of second homes and short-term lets, including reforms to local taxation, updates to the planning framework, and the publication of the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan (Welsh Government, [2023b](#); [2022b](#); [2022c](#)). For example, such measures include increasing LA powers to apply council tax premiums of up to 300% [\(Welsh Government, 2023c\)](#) and reforms to the classification of self-catering accommodation for taxation purposes [\(Welsh Government, 2025\)](#).

Footnotes

[\[8\]](#) This represents the median of median monthly incomes across postcodes in the Dwyfor area. The median of median annual incomes was calculated to be around £33,000. The reason the median of median incomes was used is that CACI provided information on the median income for each postcode. The median income for each postcode was calculated by considering every household in the postcode and modelling the number (or proportion) of households within 26 different income bands. The distribution of households across these bands is then used to calculate the median income.

[\[9\]](#) This represents the median of median monthly incomes across postcodes in the Dwyfor area. The median of median annual incomes was calculated to be £36,300. The reason the median of median incomes was used is that CACI provided information on the median income for each postcode. The median income for each postcode was calculated by considering every household in the postcode and modelling the number (or proportion) of households within 26 different income bands. The distribution of households across these bands is then used to calculate the median income.

The Second Homes and Affordability Pilot provides a practical testing ground for these interventions and serves as a learning opportunity for other regions in Wales, supporting the wider goal of sustainable and thriving communities.

The Welsh Government commissioned Alma Economics to evaluate the Pilot. The evaluation includes process, impact, and economic assessment components to provide evidence on the effectiveness of the Pilot and its expected impacts on key stakeholders in Dwyfor. The evaluation is structured in three phases:

Phase 1 (August 2023 – October 2024): This scoping phase included data mapping, analysis, and exploratory research. Findings from this phase are reported in the Phase 1 report ([Alma Economics, 2025](#)).

Phase 2 (October 2024 – September 2025): Process evaluation. Building on the Phase 1 insights, this report presents the findings from the process evaluation stage.

Phase 3 (October 2025 – October 2026): Impact and economic evaluation.

The evaluation will continue over the following year, with final completion scheduled for early 2027, ensuring a thorough assessment of the Pilot's effectiveness and outcomes.

1.6. Structure of the report

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2, 'Methodology,' provides further information on the stakeholder engagement and case study development carried out during Phase 2 of this evaluation.
- Chapter 3, 'Updates to Pilot interventions,' outlines changes to the Pilot interventions since the Phase 1 report was published in February 2025.
- Chapter 4, 'Findings from the process evaluation,' summarises our findings from stakeholder engagement with Pilot partners and stakeholders within the community, focused on assessing the process behind the Pilot interventions to understand how and why they generate intended and unintended outcomes.
- Chapter 5, 'Case studies,' presents cases where lessons can be learnt and taken forward from ways of working between Pilot partners or specific Pilot intervention implementation and their impacts.
- Chapter 6, 'Next steps,' outlines the next steps for Phase 3 of our evaluation.
- Chapter 7, 'Conclusions,' summarises the key conclusions that can be made based on the findings of the process evaluation.

2. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology used in Phase 2 of the evaluation.

2.1. Approach to carrying out stakeholder engagement

Phase 2 of the evaluation aimed to assess the processes behind the Pilot interventions, to understand how and why they generate intended and unintended outcomes. This includes an assessment of what has worked well, what has not worked so well, and why this is the case.

Phase 2 began with the research team carrying out a desk-based review of updates in Pilot monitoring data and other statistics, as well as designing a strategy for engaging key stakeholders within this phase, which implemented lessons learnt about recruitment from Phase 1. We then carried out interviews with Pilot partners, Pilot beneficiaries, and stakeholders in the community.

2.1.1. Engaging Pilot partners

Between April and July 2025, we interviewed representatives of Pilot partners at Cyngor Gwynedd, Grwp Cynefin, Tai Teg, Adra, and Parc Eryri. Representatives from the Welsh Government and Cwmpas were also interviewed. Interviews were conducted over Microsoft Teams and lasted up to 60 minutes. Six interviews were carried out in Welsh, while one was carried out in English, with the Welsh interviews analysed by a Welsh-speaking researcher and translated to be included in this report. The interviews gathered information on the background to the Pilot intervention relevant to each interviewee, the set-up phase, the implementation phase, external factors that had influenced implementation, emerging impacts, and areas to improve. The Pilot partners were reached by the Welsh Government, providing us with contact details for relevant representatives at each partner organisation.

2.1.2. Engaging Pilot beneficiaries and stakeholders within the community

Between June and August 2025, we interviewed 32 stakeholders within the local community. This included 13 second-home and short-term let owners, three business and social enterprise owners, and three people involved in community-led housing initiatives in Dwyfor. The remaining 13 interviewees were local residents and members of community groups. The interviews gathered information on the background of the interviewee and exploratory information, awareness of the Pilot, emerging impacts of Pilot interventions, and areas to improve. The engagement was a mix of online (Microsoft Teams) and phone interviews, which lasted around 45 minutes. Nine interviews were carried out in Welsh, while 23 were carried out in English, though some first-language Welsh speakers chose to engage in English. The Welsh interviews were analysed by a Welsh-speaking researcher and translated to be included in this report.

2.1.3. Recruitment of participants

To reach these groups, we employed a multi-faceted recruitment strategy that included advertising the interviews through Welsh Government social media, Cyngor Gwynedd social

media, social enterprises and charities, community councils, community-led housing initiatives, and word-of-mouth between different community groups.

We also tried to engage applicants of the Homebuy scheme within this phase of the evaluation, to understand processes surrounding the scheme and any suggested improvements. To reach this group, we sent out advertisements to participate through Tai Teg's email and offered £20 vouchers as a thank you for participation. However, recruitment for this group was overall challenging, and we were not able to interview a Homebuy applicant to feed into this report. Other local community members and one family member of a Homebuy applicant shared their views on Homebuy. We are aiming to interview Homebuy applicants in the next phase of the evaluation.

All participants were offered the opportunity, within interviews, to engage in their preferred language – Welsh or English. All recruitment materials were available in both languages.

2.1.4. Case study development

Based on the engagement carried out, we produced three case studies to allow for an in-depth investigation into the Pilot's influence. The case studies were informed by information gathered through interviews with Pilot beneficiaries, Pilot partners, and representatives from the Welsh Government. The case studies were chosen to represent a wide range of lessons learnt from the Pilot. These insights were synthesised into key takeaways for each case study that can be taken forward in the current Dwyfor Pilot as well as future piloting work.

3. Updates to Pilot interventions

The [Phase 1 report](#) provided a detailed overview of each of the proposed Pilot interventions and the reasoning behind them. Since publication in February 2025, there have been several updates to these interventions. All information included in this chapter is correct as of September 2025, unless stated otherwise.

Interventions are categorised into different pillars based on the aim they serve. In particular:

- Support: initiatives focusing on addressing affordability and availability of housing.
- Regulatory framework and system: initiatives that cover planning law and the introduction of a statutory regulation scheme for holiday accommodation.
- A Fairer Contribution: initiatives that use national and local taxation systems to ensure second homeowners make a fair and effective contribution to the communities in which they buy.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: initiatives aiming to improve the existing evidence base and the understanding of the Pilot programme's impact and management.

Interventions under the support pillar are Homebuy – Wales, Purpose Built Homebuy, Self-Build Wales, Empty Homes Grant, community-led housing, Registered Social Landlord and LA-driven development, and Deposit Loan Scheme. Interventions under the regulatory framework and system pillar are statutory registration and licensing for visitor accommodation, Article 4 Direction, and conversion of agricultural buildings. Interventions under a fairer contribution pillar are increases in maximum council tax premiums on second homes and non-domestic rates reform. Finally, interventions under the monitoring and evaluation pillar are monitoring and the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot evaluation.

3.1. Interventions under the Support pillar

3.1.1. Homebuy – Wales

Homebuy – Wales is a scheme that assists households in purchasing an existing property by providing an equity loan ([Welsh Government, n.d.a.](#)). As part of the Pilot, the scheme has key modifications in Dwyfor to enhance its accessibility and impact. The enhanced Homebuy – Wales scheme in Dwyfor represents a collaborative effort among the Welsh Government, Cyngor Gwynedd, and Tai Teg.

Since the Dwyfor Homebuy Pilot began, there have been 37 approved applications, of which 31 sales have been completed (correct as of September 2025).

Cyngor Gwynedd have also proposed to move away from a maximum income threshold basis for managing access to the Homebuy scheme. They instead proposed a formula-based approach that determines access to the scheme based entirely on need, local connection, and maximum house price. This means that those able to purchase a home on the open market without support will not be supported through the scheme.

Since Welsh Government officials have approved the proposal, they hope that once it comes into effect, more households will become eligible for Homebuy [\[Footnote 10\]](#).

3.1.2. Purpose Built Homebuy

Cyngor Gwynedd have proposed a new scheme with a model of shared equity to finance new, affordable homes on Cyngor Gwynedd-owned sites. The model would mirror Homebuy, but as a means of financing new developments, rather than existing market housing. There are five sites within the Pilot area that could trial this approach.

Since, Welsh Government officials have approved the proposal to trial the five sites and hope that this could lead to 21 affordable homes being developed [\[Footnote 11\]](#).

3.1.3. Self-Build Wales

Self-Build Wales is a Welsh Government-funded scheme delivered by the Development Bank of Wales that provides self-build development loans to support individuals in building their own homes, such that underdeveloped or underused land will be transformed into suitable plots for new self-build and custom-build homes ([Welsh Government, n.d.b.](#)).

Within the Pilot, the proposal was to adapt the Development Bank of Wales's standard self-build offerings to support local residents in Dwyfor in constructing affordable homes.

There has been ongoing collaboration between the Development Bank of Wales, Pilot partners, and landowners to model a shared equity approach. Welsh Government officials are discussing next steps with the Development Bank of Wales, but this intervention does not form part of the Pilot [\[Footnote 12\]](#).

3.1.4. Empty Homes Grant

The Welsh Government has allocated up to £50 million to support the national Empty Homes Grant, which aims to bring long-term empty properties back into use by funding renovation and energy efficiency improvements ([Welsh Government, 2023a](#)). In Gwynedd, homeowners or prospective homeowners can access grants of up to £25,000 under the Empty Homes Grant to renovate properties.

Cyngor Gwynedd has also received funding to acquire long-term empty homes. This funding is separate from the £50 million allocated for the national Empty Homes Grant. The council has secured at least £3 million for strategic property acquisitions, with £1 million specifically earmarked for the Dwyfor area as part of the wider second homes and affordability Pilot ([Welsh Government, 2023a](#)).

There have been no updates to the Empty Homes Grant since the Phase 1 report in February 2025, and it continues to operate as above.

Footnotes

[\[10\]](#) Information provided to evaluators by the Welsh Government, not publicly available.

[\[11\]](#) Information provided to evaluators by the Welsh Government, not publicly available.

3.1.5. Community-led housing

Community-led housing offers a way for communities to develop tailored housing solutions that address their specific needs. The Pilot created the role of the Community Housing Enabler to support community-led housing initiatives. The role provides ongoing support to communities, including raising awareness, sharing housing models, working in a collaborative, joined-up way with key support services, and linking them with available funding and resources. The experience gained through the support provided in Dwyfor will help inform national policy and best practice.

Four groups are now actively pursuing community-led housing projects, with a fifth deciding whether or not to take part. The four groups are on track to develop ten new, affordable homes for local use. This year, one of the groups, Nefyn Town Trust, sat on a panel at Wales's first community-led housing conference in Cardiff, where they presented the project that had received support through the Pilot.

3.1.6. Registered Social Landlord and LA-driven development

According to Welsh Government officials, the Pilot has established a close working relationship with local Registered Social Landlords, two of which are partners in the Pilot. The delivery partners have consulted with these Registered Social Landlords and maintained ongoing contact to gather evidence on the challenges to development in the area. This includes identifying the types of smaller mixed-tenure sites that align with many communities' housing needs, especially in rural areas.

There have been no updates to Registered Social Landlord and LA-driven development since the Phase 1 report in February 2025, beyond ongoing collaboration.

3.1.7. Deposit Loan Scheme

The Deposit Loan Scheme was designed to address one of the key barriers to home ownership: the inability to afford a deposit. The proposal would extend the existing Homebuy – Wales scheme by reallocating a portion of its funds to support interest-free equity loans of up to 20% of a property's value.

Welsh Government officials also arranged a tour of the projects with the new Community-Led Housing Lead at the Welsh Government and a representative from Cymraeg 2050. During this tour, the groups were able to share their experiences, which will feed into the development of a future strategy to guide the Welsh Government's approach to the sector [\[Footnote 13\]](#).

Footnote

[\[12\]](#) Information provided to evaluators by the Welsh Government, not publicly available.

[\[13\]](#) Information provided to evaluators by the Welsh Government, not publicly available.

There has been no change to the Deposit Loan Scheme as part of the Pilot since the Phase 1 report in February 2025. Whilst not currently being advanced within the Pilot, it remains an active area of focus within the Pilot partnership.

Welsh Government representatives discussed lessons learnt from the Deposit Loan Scheme within interviews for Phase 2 of the evaluation. A summary of these findings can be found in Chapter 4.

3.2. Interventions under the Regulatory framework and system pillar

3.2.1. Statutory registration and licensing for visitor accommodation

Plans to introduce statutory registration and licensing for visitor accommodation were announced in January 2024 ([Welsh Government, 2024b](#)), and the Welsh Government is committed to introducing regulation in respect of visitor accommodation in Wales. Plans are in place to begin with a registration of all visitor accommodation, with subsequent legislation to establish a licensing scheme.

The Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) Etc. (Wales) Act 2025, which received Royal Assent on 18th September 2025, provides for a national registration scheme for visitor accommodation providers across Wales. This takes a step towards the programme for government commitment to “take forward actions to cap the number of second homes, bring more homes into common ownership, and license holiday lets.”

3.2.2. Article 4 Direction

An Article 4 Direction requires property owners to obtain planning permission before converting their properties into second homes or short-term lets. As of 1st September 2024, Cyngor Gwynedd became the first LA where an Article 4 Direction came into force. It mandates planning permission for any changes in use class that may increase the number of second homes and short-term lets.

The Welsh Government has provided financial support to Cyngor Gwynedd to help develop the evidence base and cover operational costs associated with implementing the Article 4 Direction in the Dwyfor area. This funding ensures that lessons learnt from Dwyfor can inform future policy decisions and guide other LAs considering similar measures.

Cyngor Gwynedd have been using the Article 4 Direction robustly and rejecting applications. Parc Eryri introduced its Article 4 Direction in June 2025 with no issues reported to date. Both Cyngor Gwynedd and Parc Eryri have Supplementary Planning Guidance in place, though they differ. Cyngor Gwynedd guards against loss of any domestic stock, whereas Parc Eryri sets a 15% combined maximum total of second homes and short-term lets at the community level. A judicial review took place in September 2025, and the High Court found the Article 4 Direction was approved based on a misunderstanding of its legal effect. Cyngor Gwynedd is appealing, and the Direction remains in force for now.

3.2.3. Conversion of agricultural buildings

Discussions have been held regarding the implementation of a policy on converting agricultural buildings for affordable housing use. According to Welsh Government officials, this topic emerged frequently during the Pilot's local stakeholder engagement in Dwyfor. Many participants expressed a desire for a more straightforward process to convert agricultural buildings into affordable housing, similar to the process for converting buildings into short-term holiday lets.

There is still a desire within rural areas for this policy, and Cyngor Gwynedd has consulted on its new Local Development Plan regarding this [\[Footnote 14\]](#).

3.3. Interventions under A fairer contribution pillar

3.3.1. Increase of maximum council tax premiums on second homes

Under sections 12A (3) and 12B (4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ('the 1992 Act'), LAs have discretionary powers, allowing each authority to decide whether to impose a premium on second homes and/or long-term empty properties ([Welsh Government, 2023c](#)). From 1st April 2023, LAs have been able to set council tax premiums up to 300% (ibid.). From that date, Cyngor Gwynedd raised the council tax premium on second homes to 150% (from 100%).

It aims to ensure second-home owners make a fairer contribution to the communities they impact, particularly in areas where housing affordability is a challenge. Revenue from these premiums is encouraged to be reinvested in affordable housing initiatives, supporting local needs and increasing housing availability.

There has been no update to council tax premiums on second homes since the Phase 1 report in February 2025. Council tax for second homes is currently set at 150% in Gwynedd and will remain the same for 2025/26.

3.3.2. Non-domestic rates reform

Second homes that are also used as self-catering holiday accommodation may be classified as non-domestic properties and, therefore, eligible to pay non-domestic rates instead of council tax ([Welsh Government, n.d.c.](#)). As a result, a number of these properties may be eligible for small business rates relief, which removes or reduces their liability to pay local taxes.

The Welsh Government has increased the letting criteria used to classify self-catering properties as non-domestic for local tax purposes. From 1st April 2023, self-catering accommodation must have been available for commercial letting for at least 252 days and actually let for at least 182 days in the previous 12-month period to be liable for non-domestic rates. This policy was introduced to ensure that properties benefiting from business rates relief genuinely contribute to the local economy through regular and substantive letting activity.

Footnote

[\[14\]](#) Information provided to evaluators by the Welsh Government, not publicly available.

There are indications that short-term lets have moved to the domestic council tax system due to not being let for a minimum of 182 days in a 12-month period. Some of these properties may have moved to the domestic council tax system as second homes, primary residences, or empty properties [\[Footnote 15\]](#).

3.4. Interventions under the Monitoring and Evaluation pillar

3.4.1. Monitoring

Information has been collected from Cyngor Gwynedd and delivery partners to effectively monitor the Pilot programme. In Phase 1, Alma Economics, as the evaluators, identified a comprehensive list of indicators to evaluate the Pilot activities, using publicly available sources as well as datasets privately held by various stakeholders and monitoring of the Pilot programme through information collected by Pilot partners continues.

3.4.2. Second Homes and Affordability Pilot evaluation

The evaluation of the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot, led by Alma Economics, continues. Phase 1, consisting of exploratory research, was completed, and a report was published in February 2025. Phase 2, consisting of a process evaluation, assessed the barriers, challenges, and successes in implementing the Pilot and has now also been completed, the findings of which are outlined in this report.

Footnote

[\[15\]](#) Information provided to evaluators by the Welsh Government, not publicly available.

4. Findings from the process evaluation

4.1. Interviews with Pilot partners

The topic guide used for Pilot partners covered the background to Pilot interventions, the set-up and implementation phases, external factors that may have influenced implementation, emerging impacts, and areas to improve. Further details of the methods used to engage with Pilot partners are outlined in Chapter 2.

4.1.1. In summary

- The most common strength of the Pilot set-up phase was centred around building relationships between the Welsh Government and Pilot partners and refining ways of working collaboratively.
- Pilot partners overall agreed that interventions were reaching their intended beneficiaries, though this was easier to measure for some interventions than others.
- Risks and obstacles experienced were unique to each intervention, ranging from legal risks for Article 4 to the level of resources required for community-led housing.
- The Homebuy – Wales scheme and Article 4 were cited as particularly good examples of collaboration between Pilot partners.
- There were two main areas identified for improvement in the future. Firstly, having more clearly defined roles and responsibilities of Pilot partners within the Pilot, including clearer lines of communication. Secondly, allowing for more experimentation of interventions within the Pilot, including clearer guidelines around what sorts of proposals can and cannot be accepted.

4.1.2. The set-up phase of the Pilot

Overall, at the beginning of the Pilot, Pilot partners welcomed the opportunity to make a difference in the Dwyfor area and apply clear solutions that were called for by local people. Pilot partners also welcomed more generally the increase in resources and capacity for tackling housing issues that the Pilot afforded. One Pilot partner in particular felt that it was clearly explained early on what the Pilot is, who is involved, and what their role within it is.

The most common strength of the set-up phase that Pilot partners discussed centred around building relationships between the Welsh Government and Pilot partners, as well as refining ways of working collaboratively. Pilot partners spoke about inputting into the Pilot and building working relationships from the first day. Welsh Government representatives also mentioned homing in on the most effective frequency of operational and strategic group meetings as an important part of the set-up phase.

Pilot partners discussed various challenges of the set-up phase of the Pilot. One of the most commonly mentioned challenges was that Pilot partners felt there should have been more experimentation at the beginning of the Pilot. There was some frustration expressed at the bureaucracy required to propose different interventions or ways of working. The interviewees who mentioned this felt that feedback on proposals could be delayed and often

resulted in a 'no.' A couple of Pilot partners said they would have wanted to go ahead with the proposed Deposit Loan Scheme and Self-Build Wales.

A couple of interviewees also felt that some of the Pilot interventions would have gone ahead without the Pilot, but that there were still benefits.

"Gwynedd [Council] and the [Eryri National] Park would have implemented, I think, Article 4 without the Pilot. I think that would have happened, politically, but perhaps we would feel a bit more isolated, maybe the Pilot was a help in making us feel part of something bigger [...]." (Pilot partner)

Whilst new ways of working between Pilot partners were cited as a strength of setting up the Pilot, a few Pilot partners also discussed challenges that this brought. For example, difficulties with communicating the purpose of the Pilot, managing expectations of different stakeholders, and figuring out internal structures within differing organisations.

A couple of Pilot partners also expressed some frustration at the high level of management and bureaucracy among Pilot partners, which was said to occasionally disrupt the running of already established schemes.

"Although you want to include everyone and get approval, I think it would be a bit better if it were just one person making the decisions instead of everyone making the decisions." (Pilot partner)

Additionally, one Pilot partner said that there was uncertainty at the time of Pilot set-up, regarding resources and what policy changes were possible. Another Pilot partner discussed the issue of balancing local needs and viewpoints with what can be achieved through a national lens.

4.1.3. The implementation of the Pilot

Reaching intended beneficiaries

Overall, Pilot partners felt that the Pilot interventions were generally reaching their intended beneficiaries. Most partners expressed that the Homebuy – Wales scheme was the easiest to measure and that other interventions were more difficult. The Homebuy – Wales scheme was said to have been promoted at open days and through social media, but that more could be done to raise its profile. Relevant Pilot partners reported very few applicants being rejected at the time, which could indicate it has reached its target audience. One Pilot partner stated that there could have been more experimentation around Homebuy – Wales to reach a greater audience.

One Pilot partner said that Article 4 had been communicated well to the local community and that there is high awareness of it. Another stated that, as Article 4 and council tax premiums are the "macroeconomic policies" (Pilot partner) of the Pilot, they will have the greatest reach. For community-led housing initiatives, a few Pilot partners noted that volunteers in the local community had benefited and that the projects were popular locally. However, these interviewees also noted the small-scale nature of the community-housing-led initiatives.

A couple of interviewees also expressed that the Welsh Government Pilot officers had done great work in raising awareness and promoting the opportunities available through the Pilot.

Risks and obstacles of Pilot implementation

Pilot partners mostly discussed risks and obstacles around the implementation of Article 4, the Homebuy – Wales scheme, and community-led housing initiatives. For Article 4, a number of Pilot partners discussed relevant legal risks, for example, judicial review. These interviewees talked about judicial review as having always been a risk and having sought legal opinions in advance. A few of these interviewees also discussed uncertainty around resources required for implementing Article 4 as a key risk, for example, not knowing in advance how many cases and, therefore, additional work would be needed when Article 4 was implemented. One Pilot partner discussed the need for additional funding for more full-time planning officers to work on Article 4.

For the Homebuy – Wales scheme, relevant interviewees spoke about the obstacle of a data protection issue of one Pilot partner, meaning the scheme could not be advertised by another Pilot partner for around six months, which they found frustrating. One of these Pilot partners also mentioned that since the Pilot, they now need to gain permission from other Pilot partners in order to flex the eligibility criteria, whereas they previously had the authority to make changes as they saw fit, which was another obstacle identified to delivering the Homebuy scheme.

When discussing risks and obstacles of community-led housing initiatives, two Pilot partners stated that supporting these projects requires a lot of resources, and they feel that there is a Wales-wide issue around a lack of funding options. However, one interviewee expressed that the Welsh Government Pilot officers had been beneficial in highlighting options for funding.

The final risk discussed was for the overall implementation of the Pilot. One Pilot partner said that, when tailoring schemes in specific areas or targeting certain groups, interventions can be perceived as “leaving out” (Pilot partner) other groups.

Working with different stakeholders

Overall, Pilot partners reported good relationships and strong collaboration between involved stakeholders. Many Pilot partners expressed praise for how the Welsh Government Pilot officers had engaged with stakeholders, having “open conversations” (Pilot partner) and keeping interactions informal, frequent, and informative, which was said to help with relationship building. One Pilot partner particularly noted the benefits of face-to-face meetings to enhance collaboration between stakeholders.

Examples of good collaboration shared within the interviews included the Homebuy – Wales scheme. Despite some challenges around the IT system, which had knock-on effects on other Pilot partners, collaboration around Homebuy was said to be effective, with shared efforts in marketing. One Pilot partner said this had resulted in the tangible impact of families having bought a property through the scheme that they otherwise would not have. Another example of good collaboration discussed was around Article 4. Pilot partners said that despite the “usual” (Pilot partner) communication challenges and delays, the

implementation of this novel and high-profile policy change had been handled with professionalism and care.

Challenges of working with different stakeholders that Pilot partners highlighted included where stakeholders occasionally misaligned in terms of responsibility and accountability, where incorrect information was reported and shared, where there were knock-on effects from one Pilot partner's actions onto another's implementation of an intervention, and where approvals required between stakeholders can be delayed. To overcome these challenges, Pilot partners stated that good communication channels, including face-to-face meetings, and knowing where to raise issues were integral.

Working alongside other housing interventions

Pilot partners shared fewer insights on how the Pilot interventions work alongside other housing interventions in the area. One Pilot partner emphasised the importance of the Pilot working alongside Cyngor Gwynedd's Housing Action Plan. They said it was important that the Pilot did not replicate the Plan but instead complemented and filled gaps. This was figured out through extensive collaboration between the Welsh Government and Cyngor Gwynedd, with Cyngor Gwynedd playing a key role in shaping the Pilot.

4.1.4. External factors affecting the implementation of the Pilot

Pilot partners were asked about external and contextual factors that may have impacted the implementation of the Pilot. Here, more widespread factors such as inflation and rising interest rates were cited. For community-led housing initiatives specifically, increases in construction costs and a general lack of grants and funding options were mentioned.

One Pilot partner discussed the importance of having Welsh Government Pilot officers on the ground to understand contextual factors and provide feedback "up the chain" (Pilot partner) to other policy officials, in order to help them understand the ways that Dwyfor differs in characteristics from other areas. Contextual factors cited as important to understand within the Pilot included geography, rurality, transport links, Welsh language, and construction costs. One Pilot partner also stated that impacts felt within Dwyfor were more likely to be hyperlocal, affecting villages or clusters of houses.

4.1.5. Emerging impacts of the Pilot interventions

Pilot partners discussed emerging impacts of the Pilot in terms of impacts of individual interventions as well as impacts on broader priorities and ways of working.

For Article 4, a couple of Pilot partners expressed that it is difficult to know whether Article 4 itself is driving the market changes currently seen within Dwyfor, as the intervention is early on in its implementation. One Pilot partner mentioned that a monitoring framework is being developed for Article 4 that will be useful to monitor the number of second homes and short-term lets, as well as the types of planning applications coming in. Another Pilot partner said that the Pilot had aided with information and resource sharing among Pilot partners involved in Article 4.

For the Homebuy – Wales scheme, a couple of Pilot partners felt that it had been very positive for its beneficiaries and that they would not have been able to purchase the property they did without the scheme. One Pilot partner mentioned that there is a lot of paperwork for applicants, so the process can be slow at times, but “worth it” (Pilot partner). Another Pilot partner said that the Homebuy scheme was going ahead without the Pilot, but that the Pilot had supported in boosting the number of beneficiaries.

For community-led housing initiatives, one Pilot partner described positive impacts in the form of new houses coming into use within the community, but that progress can be slow. However, they noted that without the support of the Pilot, the community groups involved would not have had the confidence to deliver the initiatives. Another Pilot partner said that the Pilot had a particular impact on connecting relevant people who would otherwise not have been connected.

One Pilot partner felt that the overall Pilot aim of improving fairness and providing equal opportunity for local people in Dwyfor had been achieved. They said that some interventions have more obvious impacts than others, such as the Homebuy – Wales scheme and community-led housing initiatives. They went on to say that the Pilot had been set up to inform national policy and had achieved this in fostering long-term and “big picture thinking” (Pilot partner) among Pilot partners. This was said to be a key legacy impact of the Pilot.

Finally, some Pilot partners also discussed legacy impacts of the Pilot, such as strong relationships between Pilot partners and Welsh Government policy officials, leading to ease of collaboration and “opened doors” (Pilot partner). One Pilot partner also expressed that the specific Pilot team within the Welsh Government had been integral to “translate policy priorities into programmes” (Pilot partner) and that this had positively impacted on future ways of working.

4.1.6. Lessons learnt and areas to improve for the future

Two main areas to improve were identified through the interviews with Pilot partners. Firstly, a number of Pilot partners discussed the need for more clearly defined roles and responsibilities of Pilot partners within the Pilot, which included clearer lines of communication. Welsh Government officials, in particular, felt they had not yet “cracked” (Pilot partner) the feeling of shared responsibility among Pilot partners and wanted, in the future, to better share resources, pool knowledge, and invest together in partnership.

“[...] the main purpose of the pilot for me was to solve obstacles, not to create more bureaucracy, not to create more red tape.” (Pilot partner)

Secondly, Pilot partners also called for more experimentation with interventions within the Pilot. There was frustration among some when innovative ideas were turned down, and, in the future, they would like to see clearer guidelines around what can and cannot be accepted within the Pilot, especially as resources were spent putting proposals together. Ideas that were approved were also said to take a long time, as there are many stakeholders required for sign-off. Pilot partners would like to see this timeline shortened in the future.

"It would be nice if – under the banner of the Pilot – the Welsh Government is willing to go: “Actually, we're going to try things completely off the wall here just to test a concept if it [works] or not.” But I also understand why this is not so easy for the civil service to do that in some cases [...]” (Pilot partner)

A couple of Pilot partners, including Welsh Government officials, also discussed lessons learnt from the Deposit Loan Scheme, which is an intervention that was not taken forward within the Pilot. These Pilot partners stated that there had been collaboration, progress, and expectations around the Deposit Loan Scheme and that it was difficult when it did not go forward, both for maintaining relationships and managing local expectations. These Pilot partners said that it did not go forward for strategic reasons. One Pilot partner expressed that they hoped, in the future, the Welsh Government would work closely with banks to continue coming up with innovative ideas.

4.2. Interviews with stakeholders in the community

A similar topic guide was used for all community stakeholders, with differences only in the introductory questions to gather specific details about their second homes, short-term lets, businesses, social enterprises, and community groups as relevant. The topic guide covered background and exploratory information, awareness of the Pilot, emerging impacts of Pilot interventions, and areas to improve. Further details of the methods used to engage with community stakeholders are outlined in Chapter 2.

4.2.1. In summary

- There were mixed opinions on the affordability of housing in Dwyfor and the impact of second homes and short-term lets. Discussions often centred around a lack of employment opportunities and low wages in the area. Interviewees also brought up the need for greater distinction between second homes and short-term lets.
- Awareness of the Pilot was mixed, with higher awareness for Article 4, council tax premiums, and the Homebuy – Wales scheme, and lower awareness of community-led housing initiatives and the Pilot as an overall package of measures.
- The most common suggestion to improve communication around the Pilot interventions was to run in-person sessions in local community centres. This was because interviewees wanted to foster joined-up thinking between decision-makers and key stakeholder groups.
- Interviewees felt that there needs to be greater transparency and accountability around how revenue generated from council tax premiums is spent. Community members also called for Pilot interventions to better target Welsh language sustainability. Another key recommendation was to overall improve communication and engage local people more.

4.2.2. Stakeholder perceptions of affordability of housing in Dwyfor and the impact of second homes and short-term lets

A few local community members whom we interviewed said that there are large numbers of second homes and short-term lets in the Dwyfor area, especially in pockets such as

Abersoch. They also felt that areas outside of Abersoch that were previously less affected were now becoming “taken over” (community stakeholder) by second homes, too.

However, the second-home and short-term let owners we interviewed felt that second homes and short-term lets play an important role in generating employment opportunities, for example, where short-term let owners hire tradespeople and cleaners and where second-home owners visit local shops and restaurants. Some worried that measures to manage the number of second homes and short-term lets in the area would lead to job losses. A few local community members and a business owner also agreed with this sentiment; however, the business owner also argued that these employees need to be able to live locally in the area in order to work there, which is currently unaffordable for them.

Second-home and short-term let owners also said that there were very few employment opportunities outside of hospitality and leisure, and that the Dwyfor area relies heavily on tourism. Half of all local community members also discussed the reliance on tourism. One of these interviewees agreed but expressed that tourism still needed to be controlled in some way. Many interviewees emphasised the need to generate a greater range of employment opportunities and diversify the economy.

Around half of all interviewees also suggested that affordability issues in Dwyfor might be no different to affordability issues seen elsewhere in the UK. Some interviewees also said that affordability issues vary across different areas of Dwyfor, with Abersoch in particular having more pertinent issues than other areas within Dwyfor. A few interviewees mentioned that affordability is subjective and will mean different things to different people.

Another commonly raised issue across all stakeholder groups was that wages in the area are too low, and some of these interviewees suggested that this is the key issue of affordability in the Dwyfor area, rather than the availability of housing. Employment opportunities, commonly seasonal with zero-hour contracts, were said to exacerbate the issue. One local community member called for improved and longer-term employment opportunities in Dwyfor.

Local community members were concerned about young people in particular. They said that there are not enough employment opportunities, social activities, or investment in education to attract young people and keep them in the areas where they grew up. A couple of second-home and short-term let owners echoed this and suggested it is low salaries that are driving young people to leave the areas where they grew up, rather than housing issues.

Second-home and short-term let owners often felt that there needed to be a greater distinction between second homes and short-term lets. Some suggested that second homes were often passed down generations, with owners regularly visiting and becoming part of the community, whereas others argued that they were left empty for long periods of time. Some also suggested that short-term lets should be viewed as legitimate businesses, whereas others said that some were just second homes being rented out for extra revenue. Though opinions on the impacts of second homes and short-term lets differed, it was agreed that these property types are currently treated the same.

These views were echoed by a few local community members and a business owner who said that second homes are generally more accepted by local people than short-term lets, especially if their properties are not left empty for long periods of time. One community member expressed that second-home owners were more accepted if the property had been passed down and the family had visited for generations, versus a second-home owner with no connection to the area.

Some interviewees from across all stakeholder groups suggested that even if second homes were to go onto the market, they would still be unaffordable to local people. They also said that they would be unsuitable properties for local people to live in, citing reasons such as small size, remote location, and poor access. Another issue brought up by a few local community members and one business owner is that there are not enough new, affordable houses being built in the area.

4.2.3. Awareness of the Pilot

Overall, awareness of the Pilot across all stakeholder groups was quite mixed, depending on the Pilot intervention or type of stakeholder in question. One interviewee felt that there is high awareness among those with an interest in housing and related issues, but a few interviewees felt that there was generally low awareness of the Pilot within the community. Across all stakeholder groups, interviewees were most commonly aware of council tax premiums and Article 4. Some had heard about the Homebuy – Wales scheme, but only a small number were aware of community-led housing initiatives and the Empty Homes Grant. Some interviewees had heard of all the individual interventions but were not aware that these had come under a ‘Pilot’ or package of measures.

Of those who commented on the aims of the Pilot, a few second-home and short-term let owners agreed with the aims, especially if policies targeted second-home owners with primary residence outside of Wales. One local community member also agreed with the aims and suggested the Pilot was a good way to test interventions before scaling up outside of Dwyfor. A number of interviewees also agreed with the aims but felt that they were not being met in practice, or they called for further focus areas, such as older people or investment in businesses. A few other interviewees wanted aims around sustaining the Welsh language to either be more transparent or more central to the Pilot. A couple of second-home and short-term let owners were not aware of what the aims of the Pilot are, and some other local community members and one second-home owner felt that the aims were not justified at all.

For those who had awareness of one or more of the Pilot interventions, they most commonly got their information through local press (online or newspapers), social media (such as Facebook groups), and word-of-mouth within their social networks. A few interviewees mentioned that there is information available through Cyngor Gwynedd, but that this is often difficult to find and that you “have to know it’s there” (community stakeholder). A couple of interviewees had originally heard about the Pilot a few years ago at community events or consultations for specific interventions (namely, Article 4 and council tax premiums). However, one of these interviewees said that community events had typically not been well attended.

4.2.4. Improvements to communication around the Pilot

When asked about ways that communication around the Pilot could be improved, the most common suggestion across all stakeholder groups was to run in-person sessions that local community members could attend. These interviewees suggested these meetings could be held monthly or as a roadshow around Dwyfor, using accessible, local community centres. They called for presentations and workshops delivered by decision-makers. Generally, interviewees felt that local people could be engaged more in order to understand the changes and potential impacts of the Pilot better, as well as to shape its future. A few interviewees felt that previous consultations had been a “tick-box exercise” (community stakeholder) and instead wanted more collaboration. It was hoped this would lead to more joined-up thinking between decision-makers and key stakeholder groups in the community.

“The Pilot has given a real voice to local communities to present their concerns, where there wasn’t [before].” (Local community member)

Other suggestions included reaching out to residents, second-home and short-term let owners, and business owners through newsletters, noticeboards within the community, stands within community spaces (e.g., libraries), and Facebook groups. A few interviewees also recommended posting letters or leaflets to disseminate information, with one second-home owner suggesting using council tax databases to reach second-home and short-term let owners. A couple of interviewees also emphasised the need for clear and transparent communication from official sources because word-of-mouth, social media, and local press can misconstrue information. Finally, a couple of interviewees also wanted future communication to focus on reaching young people and older people in particular.

4.2.5. Stakeholder views on the Homebuy – Wales scheme

Whilst none of the community members we interviewed had direct experience of applying for or receiving support from the Homebuy scheme, several commented on it from an outside perspective, and one interviewee’s family member was applying at the time, so they shared the family member’s experience.

A number of these interviewees expressed that the Homebuy scheme is positive and that more local people should take advantage of it. One interviewee also said that the scheme helps to sustain the Welsh language, as local, Welsh-speaking people do not have to move away from their area to purchase a property. One of these interviewees felt that the Homebuy scheme could be promoted further through drop-in sessions in the community.

One interviewee felt that the current criteria are too harsh. Another said that the application process is lengthy with extensive paperwork and could be a daunting process for first-time buyers. This thought was echoed by the interviewee whose family member was applying for Homebuy at the time. They said that the application was subject to delays, and there was no single point of contact within Tai Teg for applicants. This interviewee suggested that applicants should be given clearer timelines for when to expect responses and actions, which would take pressure off Tai Teg, as applicants would not need to chase as much.

4.2.6. Emerging impacts of council tax premiums

Many stakeholders within the community discussed that more second homes were going up for sale as a result of the council tax premiums. Some of these interviewees said that these properties were struggling to sell. A few local community members and second-home owners also stated that second-home owners are now renting out their properties to help afford the council tax premiums. A couple of short-term let owners felt that this was negatively impacting their business as they had to lower prices and change the way they manage their holiday lets (e.g., offering shorter stays) to compete.

A number of local community members, particularly older people, were worried about their children inheriting their property and having to pay council tax premiums, as the property would be classed as their children's second home.

A few business owners commented on the impacts that they and other business owners in the community had felt. This included a case where one business owner who relies on trade from second homes had experienced a lack of business as a result of their customers' properties being put up for sale. This business owner worried that they would have to close their business in the next few years. This was echoed by another business owner who said that they had spoken to other business owners in the local community who had expressed the same thoughts.

A few interviewees discussed the positive impacts of council tax premiums. One said that second homes being put up for sale meant that more properties are available for local people to purchase. Another interviewee said that local people within the community were hopeful that their children would now be able to afford to purchase locally. Another interviewee mentioned that council tax premiums would increase council revenues, which would lead to other positive impacts in the community.

4.2.7. Emerging impacts of Article 4

Many stakeholders within the community spoke about it being more difficult to sell properties in the area as a result of Article 4. They said that where properties were devalued, they still were not reduced enough for local people to be able to afford them. One of these interviewees said that "nothing is selling" (community stakeholder). A few interviewees felt that the properties going onto the market (often former second homes) were not suitable for local people and families for reasons such as being too small, remote, or dated. A few older people within the community were also concerned about needing to sell their house in the future in order to downsize or pay for care, and not being able to sell easily.

A number of interviewees also discussed the impacts of Article 4 in combination with the council tax premiums and said that the interventions were not isolated from one another. These interviewees had mixed opinions; one felt that the combination of the two measures was effective, as one targets the market and the other targets council revenues. Another interviewee, however, felt that while second homes were going up for sale due to the premiums, Article 4 was then restricting their ability to be sold.

4.2.8. Stakeholder views on areas to improve for the future

Stakeholders within the community shared their views on areas to improve for the future, encompassing specific Pilot interventions, the Pilot overall, and wider policy changes that would be beneficial within Dwyfor.

For council tax premiums, a number of stakeholders within the community felt that there needs to be greater transparency and accountability around how revenue generated from the premiums is spent. All of these interviewees felt the revenue should go towards affordable housing, and they shared specific suggestions, such as financial assistance for local people to purchase properties, building or renovating properties for local people to live in, funding for the Empty Homes Grant, promoting the Welsh language, or generally going towards the most vulnerable, local people. Given that revenue generated from the pilot already contributes to many of these, this highlights the need for broader, improved communication around the Pilot's aims.

A number of community members also called for Pilot interventions to better target Welsh language sustainability. Specific suggestions for this included considering the Welsh language as part of the housing allocation policy, promoting the Welsh language for those moving into the area from outside Wales, and wider changes, such as changing the model of tourism in Wales to better support and promote the Welsh language.

“Making the link with the promotion of the Welsh language in light of every decision, in fact, placing this in every policy decision, placing this in law if that's possible, and placing it as a specific target to maintain and protect and increase the use of the Welsh language in light of the Dwyfor Pilot [...]” (Local community member)

Other areas to improve, discussed by some interviewees, included improved communication, for example, around success stories of the Pilot, such as new housing developments or local people purchasing homes using support schemes. Other interviewees called for communication to be improved in the form of greater transparency and clearer reporting around money spent within the Pilot, the impacts of this (e.g., uptake figures for the schemes), and future plans. This was said to be beneficial in contextualising the Pilot for local people.

More engagement of local people was another suggestion by a few stakeholders within the community. Specific groups to engage with included businesses and the charity sector, in order to best target community needs. Please note that further recommendations for improving awareness and communication were discussed earlier within section 3.2.4.

There were also calls from several community stakeholders for more houses to be built in the area. A number of these interviewees highlighted the need for meaningful consultation with local people before building new homes to better match community needs.

5. Case studies

5.1. Developing the case studies

We developed three case studies that highlight different learnings from the set-up and implementation of the Pilot. These specific case studies were chosen as they represent a wide variety of lessons that can be learnt, from a specific intervention that has generated positive insights from stakeholder groups within the community, to effective ways of working between Pilot partners and the Welsh Government.

The information presented in these case studies was gathered through interviews with Pilot beneficiaries, Pilot partners, and representatives from the Welsh Government. These insights were synthesised into key takeaways for each case study that can be taken forward in the current Dwyfor Pilot as well as future piloting work.

5.2. Community-led housing initiatives: Process and impact

5.2.1. Key takeaways

- The existence of the Pilot and its engagement with local communities has been vital in facilitating and sparking intellectual discussion and debate amongst communities about how they can increase affordable housing stock in their local area.
- Community initiatives expressed that their success was largely down to the fact that the Pilot team were local people with local knowledge and connections, which enabled them to have a successful on-the-ground presence.
- Community-led housing initiatives stressed how useful connecting with other communities had been to share resources and best practice. They also emphasised that this was valuable for transferring confidence to other communities to target local housing problems at the local scale.

Plas Carmel, Anelog, Dwyfor

Plas Carmel is situated on the far West of the Llŷn Peninsula, with the closest village, Anelog, one mile to the West. Plas Carmel's Chapel and Chapel House, called Plas, date back to 1842 and were in working order until the 1980s. When the last resident retired and left the shop and house, Plas's buildings began deteriorating, which sparked the establishment of a local committee in 2014 to oversee the Plas Carmel Project.

The project

In 2020, construction work began to restore the Plas Shop, which has since opened and is serving seasonal and local produce, offering a community space for meetings, social events, and workshops, displaying local artists' produce, and importantly bringing the history of Plas Carmel to light both through the architecture of the shop and through a historical display.

Renovating the Chapel's house, Plas (a Grade II listed building), is the next phase of the project, with the aim of housing local residents once this has been completed through renting out the house. The overarching aim is to restore the cultural and social importance

of the Plas Carmel site, creating a sustainable heritage and cultural site that brings vibrancy to the rural Westerly corner of the Llŷn Peninsula.

Impacts of the Pilot

Plas Carmel has received consistent support from Welsh Government representatives of the Pilot scheme, who crucially helped them to receive a grant when costs were adversely affecting the Plas project following the COVID-19 pandemic. Plas Carmel emphasised that the Welsh Government representative has been a spokesperson for them and that communication between the Pilot and Plas Carmel has been very good, as the needs of local people have been heard.

Cwmni Bro Antur Aelhaearn 1974, Llanaelhaearn, Dwyfor

Cwmni Bro Antur Aelhaearn 1974 is Wales's first community social enterprise and was founded with the aim of developing housing and improving housing standards for village residents. Antur Aelhaearn is working in the village of Llanaelhaearn, situated on the north-eastern end of the Llŷn Peninsula. Antur Aelhaearn would like the village to become self-sustaining by increasing the community housing stock. The village has faced ongoing challenges with the availability of housing stock for families and village amenities closing down.

The project

Alongside receiving early-stage funding through the [Perthyn Project](#) (part of the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Community Housing Plan) Antur Aelhaearn also received a grant in 2023, which enabled them to purchase the local bakery and temporarily employ six to seven people working in the bakery. The bakery also included two houses, resulting in the community having ownership of some housing stock. Since December 2024, the bakery has been in working order and work to renovate the two houses began a year ago, so that Welsh-speaking tenants from the local community can move in as soon as possible. Antur Aelhaearn have also reopened the original village shop with the help of 12 volunteers and has developed a 'how to' guide for other community housing establishments based on their experiences.

Antur Aelhaearn have faced significant financial challenges. They had to lay off six workers from their bakery due to running costs, and the bakery is currently using volunteers and reduced hours to keep operations running. They are hopeful that tenants in the two houses would contribute £10,000 to £15,000 a year, which would help with the running costs of the bakery and allow Antur Aelhaearn to support social projects in the community. Ultimately, once there are tenants in the house and the community raises more money, the aim is that Antur Aelhaearn will buy more housing for the community housing stock, which would lead to a sustainable community system. In the future, they envision establishing an umbrella body that could act as a bank for community housing trusts across Wales.

The process of enabling tenants to move into the two houses, alongside finishing the required renovation work, has also proved to be challenging. Antur Aelhaearn reported delays around the application process for funding from the council. Furthermore, the two houses are currently empty, so the project has been hit by the council tax premiums.

Impacts of the Pilot

Antur Aelhaearn has received two to three years of support from the Pilot's Welsh Government representatives and has held regular meetings to share their ideas. Antur Aelhaearn noted that the Welsh Government representatives are often seen on the ground, going to community councils and meetings. They expressed that they were very happy with the relationship they have built with the Pilot representatives.

Antur Aelhaearn reported that they had received help and consistent direction from the Pilot. They noted that the Pilot had also helped with legal advice and contacts. Importantly, "they have listened" (Pilot beneficiary) to Antur Aelhaearn and the community in terms of the issues they face and how they are trying to tackle the problem. Antur Aelhaearn also noted that the presence of the Pilot itself has sparked important and useful discussions surrounding housing, specifically about tax systems, that may not have happened otherwise.

Menter y Tŵr, Pwllheli, Dwyfor

Pwllheli faces significant housing challenges due to its unique geographical constraints (e.g., vulnerabilities to flooding, erosion, and sea level rise), leaving limited space for housing development. The existing rental housing stock is expensive and in poor condition (often very damp), leading to a severe housing shortage in the area. Despite being considered a tourist destination, Pwllheli has no available hotel accommodation for tourists, exacerbating the number of second homes and short-term lets. Pwllheli's high street has also been experiencing decline, and the Menter y Tŵr project aims to regenerate the high street alongside tackling a range of socio-economic problems facing the town. Menter y Tŵr also received early-stage funding through the [Perthyn Project](#).

The project

Menter y Tŵr began in 2022 when a large, historic hotel on Pwllheli's high street, Y Tŵr, went up for sale. The local community saw an opportunity to make meaningful change whilst also preventing other buyers from changing the use of the property to short-term lets. The community raised £60,000 within 24 hours for a deposit and by 2023 had set up a community shares scheme to complete the purchase of the hotel.

Following the purchase, the community conducted extensive consultations and established a board to direct the project. Working together, they decided the building should serve as more than a hotel, functioning as a central meeting and business hub for residents. The community plans to build a courtyard that will act both as a community gathering space and a business incubator, supporting local entrepreneurship by offering reduced-rent spaces for new ventures before they graduate to Pwllheli high street. Additionally, one floor will provide hot-desking and meeting facilities, adapting to modern working patterns while creating networking and socialising opportunities for the community.

The community is also working with a local architect to redesign the hotel so that it can house guests. Alongside this, and central to the plan of the Menter, is the provision of employment and hospitality training opportunities for people in the area, with Welsh culture at the core of the hospitality training.

The project faces financial challenges because the building is so large, with insurance costs amounting to £40,000 annually. Additionally, the project relies solely on volunteering hours, which is proving challenging from an administrative point of view. The project has also faced bureaucratic challenges regarding the grants needed for the next phases of development, which means they have been unable to follow the timelines they had hoped for.

Impacts of the Pilot

Pilot representatives working on this project have been described as "foundational to the project's success" (Pilot beneficiary) due to their local knowledge, in-depth understanding of rural concerns, and Welsh language abilities. Menter y Tŵr noted that the Pilot has provided practical guidance and helpful discussions, including organising community networking events to learn from different communities in Dwyfor about their own community enterprises. This was hugely beneficial as it sparked the idea in Pwllheli that they could tackle local problems at the community level, with the Pilot being invaluable in setting up these events, which transferred confidence from one community to another.

The Pilot also kept Menter y Tŵr updated about developments in the community housing space, notified key members when grants became available, and used its stakeholder connections to put the project in touch with relevant people and organisations. The Pilot supported Menter y Tŵr with regular check-ins and sustained engagement, showing genuine interest in how the community can be part of the solution.

Menter y Tŵr emphasised that the Pilot's success comes from its bottom-up approach and expressed a desire for the Pilot to continue over a longer period with sustained community investment. The Pilot has also facilitated intellectual discussions about problem identification and solution development, helping the community think strategically about how they can be part of the solution.

5.3. Ways of working between Pilot partners: Article 4

5.3.1. Key takeaways

- It was effective to have one authority 'paving the way' in setting up the intervention and then allowing others to learn from the obstacles they faced. This meant that other authorities could identify and overcome challenges early on, ultimately saving time and resources during implementation.
- Close collaboration and effective communication challenges are key. Cyngor Gwynedd and Parc Eryri found regular, informal, and one-to-one meetings to be most effective, as well as having specific points of contact within each authority.
- It was important to foster a sense of shared ownership of the intervention early on, not just with original authorities involved but with those who may want to implement similar interventions later. This can be done through the sharing of resources and lessons learnt.

The Article 4 Direction in Dwyfor is a novel and significant policy change requiring property owners to obtain planning permission before converting their properties into second homes or short-term lets. Cyngor Gwynedd was the first authority to go forward with the

intervention, and Parc Eryri has worked closely with it to follow suit. Cyngor Gwynedd's Article 4 Direction came into effect in September 2024, whilst Parc Eryri's came into effect in June 2025. Pilot partners described a "great" (Pilot partner) relationship between the two authorities, which started with extensive discussion and collaboration at the beginning of Cyngor Gwynedd's implementation of Article 4.

Despite some "usual" (Pilot partner) communication challenges (such as short delays in responses), communication between the two authorities was said to be very effective. This was because they kept each other informed, met regularly to discuss progress and challenges, facilitated one-to-one meetings, and were engaged with specific points of contact at each authority, all of which fostered a close working relationship.

Whilst the Welsh Government facilitates regular operational group meetings between the Pilot partners, which were described as being supportive in initially building relationships and information sharing between attendees, Cyngor Gwynedd and Parc Eryri collaborated beyond this. In this way, the two authorities took ownership of setting up and delivering the Article 4 Direction.

Cyngor Gwynedd took the lead on implementation and then shared resources with Parc Eryri that could be adapted for use. Cyngor Gwynedd also allowed Parc Eryri to build on their work to develop their own case for Article 4. A representative of Cyngor Gwynedd described sharing "everything they could" (Pilot partner) to support Parc Eryri with its implementation. A representative from Parc Eryri expressed how much they had benefited from this and how the close collaboration with Cyngor Gwynedd had supported them in "going down the path they did" (Pilot partner).

In testament to Cyngor Gwynedd's work, paving the way for Article 4 and their willingness to support other authorities, it was also said that various authorities were closely observing the progress of Article 4 within Dwyfor. Some of these authorities have been in direct contact with Cyngor Gwynedd to discuss this. Sharing this learning with other Local Planning Authorities is a requirement of the grant that Cyngor Gwynedd received from the Welsh Government to trial Article 4 [\[Footnote 16\]](#).

This case study demonstrates the ways of working between two Pilot partners who have fostered an environment of shared resources, effective communication channels, and a shared sense of ownership of a novel intervention.

Footnote

[\[16\]](#) Information provided to evaluators by the Welsh Government.

5.4. Ways of working between Pilot partners and the Welsh Government

5.4.1. Key takeaways

- It was important to provide partner organisations with the opportunity to feed into interventions early on within the design and set-up of the Pilot.
- Facilitating regular, and ideally face-to-face, meetings with partners throughout the course of the Pilot helped to build and maintain strong working relationships.
- It is important to understand the impacts that decisions might have on other partner organisations. This is especially true where proposed changes have implications for another partner's resourcing. To do so, discussing with partners how different interventions are interlinked early on is essential.
- Ways of working are most effective when they can adapt to the changing needs of partners. Collaboration should be responsive rather than static, for example, flexing the frequency of meetings at different points throughout the Pilot.

Within the Dwyfor Pilot, there are two to three Pilot partners involved in each intervention, as well as other stakeholders who need to be kept informed. Managing this falls under the responsibility of the Welsh Government Pilot team. This team was praised by Pilot partners for their work in fostering effective ways of working between the Welsh Government and Pilot partners.

Pilot partners typically worked with Welsh Government officers whose roles specifically included the setting up and implementation of the Pilot interventions, but one Pilot partner mentioned working with other Welsh Government officials, as their intervention overlapped with work being done outside of the Pilot, too.

In order for the Welsh Government team to foster effective ways of working with Pilot partners, they employed a number of approaches. Relationship building and maintaining were integral from the beginning of the Pilot. This was done through asking for input from Pilot partners from day one and then following through with regular and often face-to-face meetings throughout the course of the Pilot. As the Pilot went on, the Welsh Government team was able to hone in on the most effective frequency for meetings between all the Pilot partners, who have also provided an audit trail.

An important lesson learnt within the Pilot included gaining an understanding early on of how the decisions of the Welsh Government and Pilot partners can have knock-on effects for other Pilot partners. An example of this was the Welsh Government changing eligibility criteria for the Homebuy – Wales scheme, which could increase uptake and therefore the resources required from Tai Teg to deliver the scheme. Discussing any changes and understanding their potential impacts early on meant that Pilot partners could be prepared for any upcoming changes.

Another key lesson learnt is centred around the fact that ways of working can be adapted and refined throughout pilot delivery, and that ways of collaboration are not static. The Welsh Government remained responsive to changing communication needs and where structures needed adapting to remain effective.

6. Next steps

The next step for October 2025 to December 2026 is to complete Phase 3, the impact and economic evaluation of the Pilot. As part of this phase, we will determine the overall impact of the pilot and understand how its activities can be scaled up across local areas in Wales in the future. The priority will be to continue building the evidence base through the collection and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data, with a focus on ensuring that findings are robust, comparable, and relevant to the policy context.

During this phase, we will produce an early analysis that explores the short-term outcomes of the Pilot and provides an indication of how interventions are influencing housing affordability, second home prevalence, Welsh language sustainability, and wider community dynamics. These findings will be interpreted within a realist framework, recognising the importance of context and the mechanisms through which change occurs.

Alongside this, we will continue to engage with stakeholders and local communities, both to validate emerging findings and to capture impacts and perspectives that cannot be easily measured through quantitative data alone. This ongoing engagement will also ensure that the evaluation remains responsive to the evolving nature of the Pilot.

7. Conclusions

The conclusions presented below focus on insights into processes involved in delivering the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot. This includes (i) Pilot partners working together to set up and implement the Pilot, (ii) Pilot officers' on-the-ground presence within local communities, and (iii) awareness and communication of the Pilot for community stakeholders. They have been drawn out from engagement with Pilot partners involved in delivering the Pilot interventions, as well as stakeholders within the community of Dwyfor, such as local residents, second-home and short-term let owners, business and social enterprise owners, and community groups.

7.1. Ways of working together to set up and implement a Pilot

Overall, Pilot partners were positive about the opportunity to make a difference in Dwyfor through the increased resources and capacity that the Pilot afforded. Pilot partners also unanimously felt that the building of relationships and fostering of new ways of working were key strengths of the Pilot.

For future piloting work, especially involving a large number of delivery partners, roles, and responsibilities need to be clearly defined to avoid misalignment, which includes establishing clear lines of communication from the outset. It is imperative that a shared sense of responsibility and ownership over the Pilot is generated from the beginning to aid relevant partners in sharing resources, pooling knowledge, and investing together.

The Welsh Government could also explore more experimentation with novel interventions, but to do so, partners require clear guidelines from the outset around what sorts of proposals can and cannot be accepted to avoid spending resources on putting together proposals that will ultimately be turned down. It is also important to reach decisions as efficiently as possible, whilst acknowledging large numbers of stakeholders involved in signing off on decisions, to reduce bureaucracy-related delays.

7.2. Importance of Pilot officers on the ground in local communities

Community-led housing initiatives expressed that the success of their projects was largely down to the Pilot team having local knowledge and connections, enabling them to have a successful on-the-ground presence. Pilot partners also felt this was important so that the Pilot team could provide feedback to policy officials and help them understand the ways that the Pilot area differs in characteristics from other areas.

Therefore, another key takeaway of the process evaluation is the importance of having Pilot officers on the ground in Pilot areas. In future pilots, the approach of the Dwyfor Pilot should be replicated by having Pilot officers based in local communities with a deep understanding of localised, contextual factors that could affect Pilot areas. This is vital for both designing Pilot interventions that address unique community needs and for then implementing them effectively. Contextual factors that are necessary to understand include geography, rurality, transport links, and language.

7.3. Awareness and communication within the local community

Among stakeholders within the community, there were high levels of awareness of Article 4 and council tax premiums, but lower levels of awareness of other interventions, such as the Homebuy scheme and community-led housing initiatives. Therefore, communication about these interventions should be improved.

In-person meetings in Pilot areas for local community members could be facilitated, for example, as a roadshow of workshops and presentations around the area, delivered by Pilot partners and the Welsh Government. Local community members were keen to meet decision-makers and foster a sense of joined-up thinking around the Pilot. It should be noted that accessibility issues (for example, for older people in the community) mean that alternative methods of communication should also be used (e.g., newsletters).

There was also some lack of awareness around the Pilot's aims; for example, some community stakeholders did not seem to be aware of the Pilot being linked to the creation of affordable housing. In order to better communicate these aims and contextualise the Pilot as an overall package of measures for local community members, there should be transparent reporting around actions taken so far (including money spent), impacts of interventions, levels of uptake of Pilot schemes, and future plans of the Pilot. Reporting on the success stories of Pilot interventions would also foster a greater sense of acceptance within the community.

Annex

Interview topic guides

Pilot partners topic guide

[Welcome and introduce facilitator(s)]

We have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to evaluate the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot in Dwyfor, which I'll refer to as 'the Pilot' throughout this interview.

The interview will last up to 60 minutes and will feed into our process evaluation, with the aim to assess Pilot interventions to understand what has worked well, where there may be challenges, and if there have been intended or unintended outcomes. The insights shared will feed into a report presented to the Welsh Government.

Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary, and you are free to decide not to take part at any point. The insights you share will be fully anonymised within research outputs, meaning your comments will not be framed in a way that could identify you. Any personal data will be deleted at the end of the research contract. Also, keep in mind that as evaluators we are independent from the Welsh Government and responses will be anonymised before the Welsh Government sees them, so please be as open and honest as possible.

We also shared a Privacy Notice with you ahead of this interview, which explained the purposes of this research and what your participation would involve. Would you like me to go over any of those points again or re-share this document with you?

Do you have any questions about the research or your participation before we begin?

Background to the Pilot intervention

1. Can you tell me about your role within [local authority, Pilot partner organisation, housing association] and how this relates to the Pilot?
2. Could you describe the Pilot intervention that you helped to deliver?
 Prompt: How long has it been running? (If known)
 Prompt: How many beneficiaries have been supported to date? (If known)

Pilot intervention set-up

3. What have been the strengths and challenges of the set-up phase of the Pilot (compared to before the Pilot intervention)?
4. Has the Pilot intervention changed much since its launch?

Pilot intervention implementation

5. Is the Pilot intervention reaching its intended beneficiaries?
 Prompt: How do you normally promote the Pilot intervention?
6. [For local authorities only] Have you been using your discretionary powers?
 Prompt: If yes, in what ways?
 Prompt: If no, why not?
7. Have there been any unanticipated risks or obstacles to implementation?

8. How has the Pilot worked alongside other housing interventions in the area (Pilot and non-Pilot)?
9. How do different stakeholders work together to implement the Pilot interventions?
 Prompt: How is the communication between stakeholders going so far?
 Prompt: Are there examples of where collaborating has gone particularly well?
10. How have you found working with Welsh Government officials so far?
 Prompt: Are there examples of where collaborating has gone particularly well?
 Prompt: Are there areas where collaboration could be improved?

External factors

11. Have market changes beyond the Pilot area affected the Pilot intervention (e.g. interest rates, rents, mortgage products)?
12. Have contextual factors affected the implementation of the Pilot intervention (e.g. geography, language, demographics)?

Emerging impacts

[If the interviewee works on more than one Pilot intervention, try to break down the impacts per intervention.]

13. What, if any, effect does the Pilot intervention have on its participants?
 Prompt: Does it also affect the wider community?
 Prompt: Were any of these effects unanticipated?
14. What, if any, effect does the Pilot intervention have on Pilot partners (e.g., ways of working)?
 Prompt: Were any of these effects unanticipated?
15. Would these emerging impacts have happened without the Pilot?

Areas to improve

16. What improvements, if any, would you suggest for the future of the Pilot intervention?

Further engagement

17. Would you be able to help us access Pilot beneficiaries for interviews?

Local community members and groups topic guide

[Welcome and introduce facilitator(s)]

We have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to evaluate the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot in Dwyfor, which I'll refer to as 'the Pilot' throughout this interview.

The interview will last up to 45 minutes and will feed into our process evaluation, with the aim to assess Pilot interventions to understand what has worked well, where there may be challenges, and if there have been intended or unintended outcomes. The insights shared will feed into a report presented to the Welsh Government.

Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary, and you are free to decide not to take part at any point. The insights you share will be fully anonymised within research outputs, meaning your comments will not be framed in a way that could identify you. Any personal data will be deleted at the end of the research contract. Also, keep in mind that as

evaluators we are independent from the Welsh Government and responses will be anonymised before the Welsh Government sees them, so please be as open and honest as possible.

We also shared a Privacy Notice with you ahead of this interview, which explained the purposes of this research and what your participation would involve. Would you like me to go over any of those points again or re-share this document with you?

Do you have any questions about the research or your participation before we begin?

Background and exploratory information

1. Could you tell me a little about yourself? (e.g., which area you currently live in, how long you've lived there, if you own the property you live in, if you have recently moved, etc.)
2. Are you involved in any local community groups?
Prompt: If yes, can you tell me a bit about the community group and your involvement in it?

Awareness of the Pilot

3. Have you heard about the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot or the changes happening in the Dwyfor area?
Prompt: What do you understand its aims to be?
Prompt: Have you sought out information about the Pilot yourself or been provided with information by your local authority, community groups, other local people, etc.?

[Facilitator to go through information about Pilot as needed]

4. Have you found communication about the Pilot to be sufficient?
Prompt: Through which organisations, if any, have you received information about the Pilot?
Prompt: What suggestions, if any, do you have for how this communication could be improved, particularly to reach local people?

Emerging impacts

5. What impact, if any, have the Pilot interventions had on you overall?
Prompt: Have increases in council tax premiums for second homes and short-term lets affected you? If yes, how?
Prompt: Have changes to planning regulations affected you? If yes, how?
Prompt: Have interventions supporting local people to buy affordably in the area (e.g., Homebuy) affected you? If yes, how?
6. What impact, if any, have you noticed Pilot interventions having on the local community?
Prompt: Have you noticed any community-led housing projects in the local area? [Facilitator to unpack community-led housing further as needed.]
Prompt: Are you aware of anyone who has been impacted by the Pilot?

Areas to improve

7. What improvements, if any, would you suggest for the future of the Pilot?

Debrief

8. Is there anything else you wish to add that we have not discussed?

Second-home and short-term let owners topic guide

[Welcome and introduce facilitator(s)]

We have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to evaluate the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot in Dwyfor, which I'll refer to as 'the Pilot' throughout this interview.

The interview will last up to 45 minutes and will feed into our process evaluation, with the aim to assess Pilot interventions to understand what has worked well, where there may be challenges, and if there have been intended or unintended outcomes. The insights shared will feed into a report presented to the Welsh Government.

Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary, and you are free to decide not to take part at any point. The insights you share will be fully anonymised within research outputs, meaning your comments will not be framed in a way that could identify you. Any personal data will be deleted at the end of the research contract. Also, keep in mind that as evaluators we are independent from the Welsh Government and responses will be anonymised before the Welsh Government sees them, so please be as open and honest as possible.

We also shared a Privacy Notice with you ahead of this interview, which explained the purposes of this research and what your participation would involve. Would you like me to go over any of those points again or re-share this document with you?

Do you have any questions about the research or your participation before we begin?

Background and exploratory information

1. Is your main home (not your second home or short-term let) located inside or outside of the Dwyfor area?
2. Could you tell me about the second home(s) or short-term let(s) you own in the Dwyfor area?
Prompt: Short description of property (type, size, location), how long you've owned it, how it's used (if you occupy it yourself or it's rented out), etc.
3. What role do second home and short-term let owners play in the local community in Dwyfor?

Prompt: Please consider (i) the local economy, (ii) the Welsh language, and (iii) community cohesion.

Awareness of the Pilot

4. Have you heard about the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot or the changes happening in the Dwyfor area?

Prompt: What do you understand its aims to be?

Prompt: Have you sought out information about the Pilot yourself or been provided with information by your local authority, representative bodies, other second-home owners, etc.?

[Facilitator to go through information about Pilot as needed]

5. Have you found communication about the Pilot to be sufficient?

Prompt: Through which organisations, if any, have you received information about the Pilot?

Prompt: What suggestions, if any, do you have for how this communication could be improved, particularly to reach second-home and short-term let owners?

Prompt: What additional communication of information would you have liked to receive about the Pilot?

Emerging impacts

6. What impact, if any, have the Pilot interventions had on you overall?

Prompt: Have increases in council tax premiums affected you? If yes, how?

Prompt: Have changes to planning regulations affected you? If yes, how?

Prompt: Has the Pilot led to any changes in the way you are managing your second home or short-term let? E.g. plan to sell the property.

7. What impact, if any, have you noticed Pilot interventions having on the local community?

Areas to improve

8. What improvements, if any, would you suggest for the future of the Pilot?

Debrief

9. Is there anything else you wish to add that we have not discussed?

10. We are looking to include more second-home and short-term let owners within this research. Do you have any suggestions for channels we could use to contact others?

Local businesses and social enterprises topic guide

[Welcome and introduce facilitator(s)]

We have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to evaluate the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot in Dwyfor, which I'll refer to as 'the Pilot' throughout this interview.

The interview will last up to 45 minutes and will feed into our process evaluation, with the aim to assess Pilot interventions to understand what has worked well, where there may be challenges, and if there have been intended or unintended outcomes. The insights shared will feed into a report presented to the Welsh Government.

Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary, and you are free to decide not to take part at any point. The insights you share will be fully anonymised within research outputs, meaning your comments will not be framed in a way that could identify you. Any personal data will be deleted at the end of the research contract. Also, keep in mind that as evaluators we are independent from the Welsh Government and responses will be

anonymised before the Welsh Government sees them, so please be as open and honest as possible.

We also shared a Privacy Notice with you ahead of this interview, which explained the purposes of this research and what your participation would involve. Would you like me to go over any of those points again or re-share this document with you?

Do you have any questions about the research or your participation before we begin?

Background and exploratory information

1. Could you tell me about your business / social enterprise in the Dwyfor area?
Prompt: Short description of business (sector, size, location), how long it's been running, etc.
2. What role do local business / social enterprise owners play in the local community in Dwyfor?

Awareness of the Pilot

3. Have you heard about the Second Homes and Affordability Pilot or the changes happening in the Dwyfor area?
Prompt: What do you understand its aims to be?
Prompt: Have you sought out information about the Pilot yourself or been provided with information by your local authority, representative bodies, other business / social enterprise owners, etc.?

[Facilitator to go through information about Pilot as needed]

4. Have you found communication about the Pilot to be sufficient?
Prompt: Through which organisations, if any, have you received information about the Pilot?
Follow-up: Have potential impacts of the Pilot on your business / social enterprise been communicated to you?
Prompt: What suggestions, if any, do you have for how this communication could be improved, particularly to reach local business and social enterprise owners?

Emerging impacts

5. What impact, if any, have the Pilot interventions had on you overall?
Prompt: Have increases in council tax premiums for second homes and short-term lets affected you? If yes, how?
Prompt: Have changes to planning regulations affected you? If yes, how?
6. What impact, if any, have you noticed Pilot interventions having on the local community?

Areas to improve

7. What improvements, if any, would you suggest for the future of the Pilot?

Debrief

8. Is there anything else you wish to add that we have not discussed?

Pilot beneficiaries topic guide

[Welcome and introduce facilitator(s)]

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Do you have any questions about the research or your participation before we begin?

Background to the Pilot intervention

1. Could you tell me a little about yourself? (e.g., which area you currently live in, how long you've lived there, if you own the property you live in, if you have recently moved, etc.)
2. Which Pilot intervention have you been supported by? [Note that the interviewee may not know the name of the Pilot intervention]
 - Prompt: How long have you been accessing this support?
 - Prompt: Did you consider any other support?
 - Follow-up: If so, why did you choose this in particular?

Application and onboarding process

3. How did you find out about the [Pilot intervention]?
 - Prompt: Were you aware of any other Pilot interventions?
4. Do you feel there is good awareness of Pilot interventions within your community?
 - Prompt: Do you feel there is good awareness of [Pilot intervention] specifically?
5. How did you find the process of initially reaching out and receiving support?
 - Prompt: Did you receive sufficient information during this process?
 - Prompt: What additional support or information would you have benefited from?

Pilot intervention implementation

6. Which organisations have been involved in the implementation of the Pilot intervention?

Prompt: In your view, how effectively do they work together?

Emerging impacts

7. What impact has the support had on your housing?

Prompt: Has the Pilot/ [pilot intervention] impacted your ability to buy in your local area?

8. Do you think the Pilot intervention impacted your local community in any way?

9. Do you think the Pilot intervention contributed to sustaining Welsh as a community language?

10. Have you experienced any other impacts from taking part in the Pilot intervention?

Prompt: Any changes to your wellbeing?

Prompt: Were any of these impacts unanticipated?

11. What position do you think you would be in now if it weren't for the Pilot intervention (e.g. with regards to housing and wellbeing)?

Areas to improve

12. What improvements, if any, would you suggest for the future of the Pilot intervention that you received support for?

Debrief

13. Is there anything else you wish to add that we have not discussed?