



RTPI Cymru

Royal Town Planning Institute
Sefydliad Cynllunio Trefol Brenhinol

Royal Town Planning Institute
Cymru (RTPI Cymru)
Studio 107
Creative Quarter
8a Morgan Arcade
Cardiff
CF10 1AF
Tel +44 (0)20 7929 8197
email walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk
www.rtpi.org.uk/wales

22nd February 2022

e-mail response sent to: UnedlaithGymraegWelshLanguageUnit@gov.wales

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to: Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the largest professional institute for planners in Europe, representing some 27,000 spatial planners. RTPI Cymru represents the RTPI in Wales, with 1,300 members. The Institute seeks to advance the science and art of planning, working for the long-term common good and well-being of current and future generations. The RTPI develops and shapes policy affecting the built environment, works to raise professional standards and supports members through continuous education, training and development.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. Our general points in relation to the topic area are below. We welcome Welsh Government addressing this important issue for Wales. The recent rise in home working has resulted in greater freedom and flexibility to choose where we live and increased interest in rural living particularly. This has resulted in additional pressures and opportunities for communities across Wales, including Welsh language communities.

We note Welsh Government's targets, set out in Cymraeg 2050, to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and doubling the daily use of the Welsh language. We believe it is vital that any discussion around housing and linguistics is linked to broader socio-economic issues and connectivity. These issues need addressing holistically with a clear understanding of how issues, including the Welsh language fits into this bigger picture.

We welcome the confirmation of the Welsh Government commission to safeguard the future of the Welsh language as a community language. Its proposed role in undertaking socio-linguistic analysis, providing evidence for local authorities and developing an understanding of the linguistic, socio-economic and social restructuring challenges, as well as making policy recommendations, makes it relevant to planning and placemaking.

While the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out its aim for “a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language”, the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 does not directly reference a “thriving Welsh language”, but it does support the “use of the Welsh language through requiring development plans to assess their impact of the use of the Welsh language”, and “provide decision makers with clarity that considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language may be considered so far as they are material to applications for planning permission” [planning-wales-act-2015-explanatory-memorandum.pdf](https://www.gov.wales/planning-wales-act-2015-explanatory-memorandum.pdf) ([gov.wales](https://www.gov.wales)).

Future Wales, adopted in 2021, supports the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, with Outcome 4 addressing “places with a thriving Welsh Language”. While this is an important inclusion in national planning policy we would encourage and support further discussion and consideration of how planning and placemaking at all levels can better support a thriving Welsh language in practice. Placemaking cannot look at the Welsh language in isolation. However, delivering high quality sustainable places with a thriving Welsh language involves better integration of policy areas and better collaboration between linguistic and spatial planners. In an article for RTPI Cymru, Owain Wyn FRTPI addresses these issues in Placemaking as if a Welsh language mattered (Creu Lleuedd ... lle mae'r Gymraeg yn ffynnu): [RTPI | RTPI Cymru Policy and research](#)

Further clarity would be welcomed, setting out the role of planning and planners in strengthening placemaking to support the Welsh language through development planning and development management. A specific example of this is the need for greater clarity and guidance on TAN 20 (section 2.7 Defined Areas) of what it means for Local Development Plans to identify an area of sensitivity and/or significance. This is something which the above mentioned Commission could address, or through commissioning further research.

To provide alignment with Cymraeg 2050 to plan for a thriving and flourishing Welsh language, we recommend consideration of an emphasis on ‘enhancement’ in addition to ‘mitigation’. This has been addressed for biodiversity, as can be seen here: [Biodiversity enhancements: guidance for heads of planning | GOV.WALES](#). Whilst we recognise biodiversity enhancements can be considered more easily for individual developments than is feasible for Welsh language considerations, applying the principle at the development plan stage would have value in considering.

The RTPI Measuring What Matters: Planning Outcomes Research can provide a useful toolkit and routemap to support the cyclical monitoring of policies and objectives to ensure places where the Welsh language is flourishing, rather than just surviving. [RTPI | RTPI Cymru Policy and research](#) “If Placemaking is to be judged on its added value in creating a thriving Welsh language then proper structures and resourcing need to be put in place - at national, strategic and local levels – to measure and evaluate that contribution.” [RTPI | RTPI Cymru Policy and research](#).

If you require further assistance, please contact RTPI Cymru on 020 7929 8197 or e-mail Roisin Willmott at walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk

Yours sincerely,



Dr Roisin Willmott OBE FRTPI
Director