



**RTPI Cymru**

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13th January 2023

**e-mail response sent to: [cymraeg@gov.wales](mailto:cymraeg@gov.wales)**

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

**Response to: The future of Welsh-speaking Communities: call for evidence**

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 call for evidence. Our general planning points in relation to the topic area are set out below under the relevant headings.

**What steps should be taken to strengthen Welsh speaking communities?**

We welcome Welsh Government addressing this important issue for Wales. The rise in home working in particular has resulted in greater freedom and flexibility to choose where we live and in turn, increased interest in rural living. This has resulted in additional pressures and opportunities for communities across Wales, including Welsh language communities. RTPI Cymru has published a paper exploring the issues and potential solutions around the spiralling use of housing for short-term holiday lets and second homes in Wales, which may provide information or evidence in relation to the Welsh language. [RTPI | Holiday Homes in Wales](#)

To reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and doubling the daily use of the Welsh language, as set out in Cymraeg 2050, requires wide discussion around linguistics, linking 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 along with the implications of proposals for change.

We welcome the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner in safeguarding the future of the Welsh language as a community language, which is relevant to both planning and placemaking.

### **How can we strengthen Welsh Speaking Communities in accordance with the Well Being of Future Generations Act?**

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out its aim for “a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language” and redefines sustainable development to include culture as a fourth strand, alongside environment, social and economy. This legal redefinition enables planning through the development plan and decisions to take account of language, as part of the cultural consideration of an area.

The Placemaking Wales Charter sets out the different elements required to deliver good places, and includes identity as a core consideration: “The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.” The Charter can be viewed here: [dcfw.org/placemaking/](http://dcfw.org/placemaking/)

### **How can we use regional or local policies in order to strengthen Welsh speaking communities?**

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 \(gov.wales\)](#).

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 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, (Creu Lleoedd ... lle mae'r Gymraeg yn ffynnu): [RTPI | Creu Lleoedd...lle mae'r Gymraeg yn ffynnu RTPI | Placemaking as if a thriving Welsh language mattered](#)

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 Commissioner could address, or through commissioning further research.

**What policies should be introduced in order to strengthen Welsh-speaking communities?**

To provide alignment with Cymraeg 2050 and 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 in Wales: [Biodiversity enhancements: guidance for heads of planning | GOV.WALES](#). While we recognise biodiversity enhancements can be considered more easily for individual developments than is feasible for Welsh language considerations, we believe there is value in considering this type of approach.

**How can we strengthen Welsh speaking communities in a way that intersect with some of the Welsh speaking Government’s other objectives?**

The RTPI Measuring What Matters: Planning Outcomes Research can provide a useful toolkit and routemap to support the cyclical monitoring of a wider range of policies and objectives to ensure places where the Welsh language is flourishing, rather than just surviving. [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](mailto:walespolicy@rtpi.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,



Dr Roisin Willmott OBE FRTPi  
**Director**