



# Complete Agenda

Democracy Service  
Council Offices  
CAERNARFON  
Gwynedd  
LL55 1SH

Meeting

## EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Date and Time

**1.30 pm, THURSDAY, 24TH OCTOBER, 2024**

**\* NOTE \***

**This meeting will be webcast**

[https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en\\_GB/portal/home](https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home)

Location

**Multi-location Meeting  
Siambwr Dafydd Orwig, Swyddfeydd y Cyngor, Caernarfon LL55 1SH /  
virtually on Zoom**

Contact Point

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(DISTRIBUTED 2/10/24)

**Ian Jones  
Head of Democracy Service**

[www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru](http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru)

**WEDNESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2024**

Dear Councillor,

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF CYNGOR GWYNEDD – THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2024**

**YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED** to attend a multi-location meeting of **CYNGOR GWYNEDD** which will be held at **1.30 pm** on **THURSDAY, 24TH OCTOBER, 2024** in **SIAMBR DAFYDD ORWIG, SWYDDFEYDD Y CYNGOR, CAERNARFON LL55 1SH / VIRTUALLY ON ZOOM**, to consider the matters mentioned in the following agenda.

Yours faithfully,



Head of Democracy Services

The following rooms will be available for the political groups during the morning: -

Plaid Cymru - Siambr Dafydd Orwig

Independent – Siambr Hywel Dda

Lib / Lab – Ystafell Ogwen

# **AGENDA**

**1. APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

**3. THE CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive any Chair's announcements.

**4. URGENT ITEMS**

To note any items which are urgent business in the opinion of the Chairman so they may be considered.

**5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021 - 4 - 45  
DECISION ON THE ADOPTION OF A SINGLE TRANSFERRABLE  
VOTE SYSTEM FOR CYNGOR GWYNEDD ELECTIONS**

To submit the report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support.

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>24 OCTOBER 2024</b>
<b>TITLE OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 ("The Act") –Decision on the adoption of a Single Transferable Vote ("STV") system for Cyngor Gwynedd elections.</b>
<b>STATUTORY DECISION</b>	<b>In accordance with Section 8 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, that the Council decides to adopt a single transferable vote system for Cyngor Gwynedd elections hereafter.</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	<b>Cllr Menna Trenholme</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Iwan G D Evans – Head of Legal Services</b>

## 1. Background

1.1 Section 5 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 permits any Principal Council to choose between two Local Government voting systems for Principal Councils:

- Simple majority system ("first past the post")
- Single Transferable Vote System ("STV")

This option is available to each of the 22 Principal Councils in Wales individually. The Explanatory Note to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill in Appendix 1 explains the legislative background. Following the Council's decision in December 2023 to hold a consultation on changing the voting system, this report is intended to bring this decision before the Council following the consultation.

## 2. STV System

2.1 STV is a preferential voting system and operates in multi-member constituencies. Voters list candidates in order of preference by marking 1, 2, 3 etc. against the names of the individual candidates on the ballot paper. Candidates must have a certain quota of votes in order to be elected.

2.2 The following summarises the STV system that would be adopted. It resembles the Northern Ireland Assembly system - the "Gregory" System.

- Voters express their choice by ranking candidates in order of preference for the available seats. Therefore, vote by numbering candidates according to the preference of the elector on the ballot paper.
- A "quota" is then established. This is based on dividing the number of valid ballot papers by the number of seats contested + 1. If a candidate receives a number of first preference votes equal or above the "quota" then they are elected.
- If all seats are not filled after the first phase, then the remaining votes of the successful candidates above the quota are apportioned and re-distributed according to second preference recorded on those papers. (A formula is applied in terms of counting the value of the votes that are transferred)
- If a combination of a candidate's first and second preference votes reaches the quota after this stage they are elected.
- If there are empty seats remaining the process is repeated using the remainder of the votes.
- There is a procedure for removing candidates who do not reach the quota and a procedure for electing the remaining candidates if there are empty seats remaining.

2.3 The Regulations, the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Single Transferable Vote) (Wales) Rules 2023, already in force establish the detailed electoral arrangements for the conduct of elections through this system should any Council in Wales adopt the STV system.

### **3. What is the process for changing systems?**

3.1 Unless the Council decides to change the system and adopt a STV system, a simple majority system will be used in Cyngor Gwynedd elections. Changing is the decision of the Full Council that cannot be delegated. Any Principal Council in Wales can do this. It is not dependent on the position or decision of any other Council. It can mean that one Council uses a current system of a simple majority, and the neighbouring Council uses a STV system. This change is not open to Town and Community Councils which will continue with the current system regardless of the county decision. Specific steps need to be followed if an alternative system is to be determined.

3.2 Before a decision is made to change the system, a consultation must be held in accordance with the statutory requirements and the process followed and the results are reported in the following section. The Council decided to consult with Gwynedd local government constituents and the Town and Community Councils only, which is the statutory requirement. Following a consultation on the proposal, an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council must be called specifically for this decision only. 21 days' advance notice of the meeting must be given. In order to adopt a proposal to change

the system, the number of members who vote in favour must be at least two thirds of the number of seats on the Council, namely 46/69.

3.3 The decision must be made before 15 November in the year that is three years before the election year, namely 15 November 2024 in this term. If the system is changed it will not be possible to exercise the power to change again until 2 local government terms have elapsed. If it is decided to switch to a STV system, the Welsh Ministers and the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission must be notified in a specific form and timetable.

#### 4. Consultation

4.1 Following the delay of the proposed programme due to the UK General Election, a broad consultation process was undertaken between 15 July 2024 and 15 September 2024 with residents who are registered to vote in Gwynedd and Community/Town/City Councils. The Council's Communications and Engagement Service was commissioned to prepare, carry out and promote the consultation. In accordance with the decision of the Council, a consultation document (Appendix 2) was prepared with the approval of the Leaders of the Political Groups and the Cabinet Member.

4.2 The steps in 5. were followed in order to carry out the consultation.

#### 5. Single Transferable Vote Consultation

5.1 An electronic questionnaire was produced for Gwynedd residents on the electoral roll, asking the following question:

**"What voting system would you want Cyngor Gwynedd to use to elect Councillors? Choose one of the following answers**

Simple Majority (*first past the post*)

Single Transferable Vote (*proportional voting or 'proportional representation' system*)

No opinion

**Explain why**

Paper versions of the questionnaire were available at all libraries and Siopau Gwynedd across the county. It was also possible to request a paper copy by post or a copy of the questionnaire in a different format/language (other than Welsh or English) by calling Galw Gwynedd.

5.2 The electronic questionnaire was available on the Council’s website – [www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru](http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru) - along with information about the Single Transferable Vote system, a video by the Electoral Commission explaining the system and a link to the report to the Council in December 2023.

5.3 A specific electronic questionnaire asking the same question was prepared for Community/Town/City Councils. An e-mail was sent to each Community/Town/City Council, which included a consultation background document and a link to the electronic questionnaire, from the Legal Services on 15 July 2024, with a further reminder on the 13 September.

5.4 A detailed communication plan was drawn up for the duration of the consultation (8 weeks), which included:

(i) a press release which was printed in the Cambrian News newspaper on 24 July, and appeared in four on-line articles in the Herald, Cambrian News, Nation.Cymru and the Electoral Reform Society (links to articles below).

[Gwynedd: Have your say on fairer elections – Electoral Reform Society – ERS \(electoral-reform.org.uk\)](https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/gwynedd-have-your-say-on-fairer-elections)

[Three councils. One goal: Fairer local democracy \(nation.cymru\)](https://nation.cymru/three-councils-one-goal-fairer-local-democracy)

[Last chance to have say on Gwynedd voting system | cambrian-news.co.uk](https://www.cambrian-news.co.uk/last-chance-to-have-say-on-gwynedd-voting-system)

[Last chance to have your say on the voting system in Gwynedd - Herald.Wales](https://www.herald.wales/last-chance-to-have-your-say-on-the-voting-system-in-gwynedd)

(ii) several social media posts which were monitored in terms of response throughout the period. They created a total of 312 clicks and 78 shares on Facebook and X (full table below).

**Social Media response statistics (Facebook and X)**

Date of messages	Number who clicked on the link	Number of shares
17/07/24	119	33
29/07/24	26	3
06/08/24	40	3
14/08/24	20	7
22/08/24	22	7
30/08/24	11	4
05/09/24	36	8

08/09/24	20	6
13/09/24	18	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>78</b>

- 5.5 Visits to the consultation page on the website were also monitored. After a few weeks it was decided that a pop-up message was needed on the website to draw attention to the consultation. This significantly increased the number of responses. The page on the website received a total of 5,657 views during the consultation period.
- 5.6 There was a message promoting the consultation in the weekly Members' Bulletin throughout the consultation period and information also appeared on the Members' Intranet.
- 5.7 The consultation was promoted amongst staff by including information 3 times in the weekly e-bulletin for staff 'Gair Wythnosol' (25/7, 1/8, 15/8) and on the staff intranet homepage throughout the consultation.
- 5.8 A process of checking the name and post code of each person who responded against the Electoral Roll was carried out by the Electoral Service, to make sure that only the responses of Gwynedd voters over the age of 16 were analysed by the Council's Research Team.

**Visits to the page on the Cyngor Gwynedd website during the period:**

Total of 5,657

**6. Consultation Results**

- 6.1 A report prepared by the Council's Research Team on the results of the consultation process is attached in Appendix 3. 1% of constituents responded to the consultation and 23% of the county's Town and Community Councils. The objective of a consultation is to seek views on a proposal and not to hold a referendum on the question. There are also two separate statutory classes of consultation. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the specific responses from constituents and also the Town and Community Councils who state their views as a public body. The results of these processes are comprehensively reported in the report with data analysis regarding the individual respondents. Like every consultation, the result contributes to the considerations and does not rule the direction. The decision, whatever it may be, has to be based in the range of considerations including the evaluation of these results.

**7. Boundaries Review**



7.1 Should the Council decide to adopt the STV system then specific legal action needs to be taken which is to formally inform the Welsh Ministers of the decision. This will result in a direction from the Minister to the Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales to undertake a review of the Electoral Arrangements for Cyngor Gwynedd and to set a date for the completion of the review. Council "Electoral Arrangements" are defined as (i) the number of councillors in the area (ii) the number, size and boundaries of wards (iii) the number of councillors for each ward (iv) the name of each ward.

7.2 The objective of the process will be to create new wards of between 3 and 6 members which are required for the implementation of the system. The Commission in accordance with the direction received will conduct a process similar to the previous electoral review in 2017-21. According to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the Commission, through a consultative process, must develop a model in accordance with the following requirements:

"1.(a) seek to ensure that the ratio of local government electors to the number of councillors of the principal council to be elected for the area under review is the same in each electoral ward of the council area, as close as it may be, and

(b) have regard to —

(i) the desirability of setting boundaries for easily identifiable electoral wards and that they will remain so, and

(ii) the desirability of not breaking the local connection when setting boundaries for electoral wards.

(2) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(a) consideration must be given to

—

(a) any discrepancy between the number of local government electors and the number of persons eligible to be local government electors (as seen in relevant official statistics), and

(b) any change in the number or distribution of local government constituents in the area under review that is likely to occur in the five-year period commencing immediately after recommendations are made.

At the end of the process, the Commission will prepare a report to the Minister with recommendations and based on the report an order will be made formally changing the boundaries for the May 2027 election.

## **8. Resource Implications**

- 8.1 From decision to adoption of STV, the main demand on resources regarding staff time would be working on the Electoral Arrangements review in the first instance and adapting and updating electoral IT systems to incorporate the new wards into registers and maps. A proportional representation system has been in place in Senedd Cymru elections and, therefore, this type of voting system is familiar to polling station staff.
- 8.2 Ideally, a STV system would use an electronic counting system. However, the Government acknowledges that such a system is very costly. Therefore, a STV system called the Simple Gregory Method is used which can be counted by hand. However, the experience of counting by hand across the UK shows that the system is time-consuming and the counting process can take two days or more. There will also be a need for storage for ballot paper that may come in for further rounds of counting later on in the count. Therefore, the main impact will be in the post-poll count. It is estimated that this would involve an additional cost on an election of around £16,000 per day (mainly staff and count centre hire) which can be funded from current resources.

## **9. Impact Assessment**

- 9.1 An Equality and Language Impact Assessment has been prepared which can be seen in Appendix 4. As part of the consultation process, data was collected to support this assessment. As noted, there are no specific impacts deriving from a change in voting system whether this is positive or negative.

## **10. Decision**

- 10.1 Due to the provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 there are statutory requirements regarding this decision.
- A. In order to adopt a single transferable vote system, 46 elected members must vote in favour of adoption.
  - B. It is therefore necessary to decide on the specific question of whether or not the Council wants to adopt a single transferable vote system.
  - C. As a result, the statutory question is set forth in the report and this will require a specific vote to ensure a proper decision whether in favour or not.
  - D. If 46 members do not vote in favour of adopting a single transferable vote system then the regime will not change for the 2027 elections and an Electoral Arrangements review will not commence.

### **Statutory Decision**

**In accordance with Section 8 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, that the Council decides to adopt a single transferable vote system for Cyngor Gwynedd elections hereafter.**

**Monitoring Officer**

Author of the report

**Finance Officer**

*The report notes that the counting of votes under the STV system will likely be more intense on resources than the current arrangements. Part 8 of the report sets out the financial implications and the estimated additional costs. However, the report also notes that these additional costs will be able to be met out of existing budgets. Therefore, the financial considerations are not in themselves a barrier to changing the arrangements if that is the Council's aspiration."*

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Explanatory Note - Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021**

#### **Voting system - offer a choice: first past the post or single transferable vote**

3.28 The first past the post system, also known as the "simple majority system", is the only voting system to be used to elect local councils in Wales since the introduction of elected local government at the end of the 19th century. This is also the system used to elect MPs, constituency Assembly Members and Welsh town and community councillors. Consequently, this is the voting system that Welsh electors are most familiar with.

3.29 Supporters of the 'First Past the Post' system argue that the voting and counting procedures are simple, familiar and relatively cheap, and there is an obvious link between the candidates' position after counting the votes and whether or not they are elected.

3.30 The White Paper - Local Government Reform: Resilience and Renewal' included a proposal to permit individual principal council to choose their voting system, of either the first past the post system or the single transferable vote system.

3.31 The single transferable vote is a voting by preference system, meaning that the electors must rank the candidates in order, using numbers. Electors may include all the available candidates or only those of their choosing. The single transferable vote is considered to be a "proportional representation" system. Typically, it leads to results that overall reflect the proportions of votes made for the different political parties, groups and independent candidates in individual electoral areas and in the election overall.

3.32 Every principal council election is a stand-alone election, restricted to the council area. It is appropriate for the council to determine its own voting system, choosing the option that reflects the needs of local people and communities.

3.33 The Bill provides that every principal council can decide for itself which voting system to use, the first past the post or the single transferable vote. Principal councils will continue to use the existing electoral system, until they decide to change. To change the voting system, it will need to be supported by at least two thirds of the total number of councillors on the council (be they in attendance and voting on the motion to change or not). If the council has considered and refused the proposal to change the voting system, the council cannot consider this matter again within the same electoral cycle.

3.34 A provision is made to prevent a principal council who has changed to a different voting system from returning to the old procedure until at least two elections have been held under that new system.

3.35 To change from one voting system to another, a new review of the council area's electoral arrangements would be required, and would be conducted by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

## **Possible changes to the voting system for electing County Councillors**

Cyngor Gwynedd has decided to hold a public consultation on changing the voting system for electing Gwynedd Councillors.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (Section 5), gives councils the right to choose between two voting systems. Both systems are explained below:

### **Simple Majority System**

1. An elector chooses one candidate (or more in some Wards) from the ballot paper by putting a cross in the box.
2. One candidate (or more in some Wards) is elected Councillor for the Ward.
3. The candidate who receives the most votes is elected.
4. This is the system currently used for Cyngor Gwynedd elections.

### **Single Transferable Vote System**

1. Voters rank candidates on the ballot paper in order of preference, using numbers – their favourite as number 1, their second favourite as number 2 and so on. A voter can number all candidates on the ballot paper, just a few or only one.
2. This system operates on a larger Ward basis with between 3 and 6 Councillors representing each Ward.
3. Candidates are elected by reaching a certain quota of votes which is determined by dividing the total number of votes cast in the Ward with the number of seats available.
4. Candidates who reach or pass the quota will be elected. If there are seats left, surplus votes from the successful candidates and the votes of those candidates at the bottom of the results list are re-distributed to other candidates (using the elector's order of preference), until all seats are filled.

### **More information**

More information is available by visiting [www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/PSD](http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/PSD)



## **How is Cyngor Gwynedd going to decide what to do?**

If Cyngor Gwynedd wants to move to a Single Transferable Vote System for the next Council Election in 2027, a decision must be made before 15 November 2024.

The Full Council will make a final decision at a special meeting in October 2024.

Before deciding to keep the current system (Simple Majority System) or change to a new system (Single Transferable Vote), we are consulting with the electorate of Gwynedd to see what you think.

## **How can I give my opinion?**

Complete this questionnaire and return it to us in the freepost envelope or you can complete it online by going to **[www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/PSD](http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/PSD)**

If you need the questionnaire in another format or language, please contact us by calling 01766 771000.

**All responses must be returned by the deadline on 15 September 2024.**

All responses from Gwynedd voters will be analysed, and the results presented as part of a report to the Full Council on 24 October 2024, to help Councillors make their decision.



## **Possible changes to the voting system for electing County Councillors**

Fill in this short questionnaire in order to give your opinion about possible changes to the voting system for electing County Councillors.

Your response will be treated strictly confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). Three months after the closing date of the consultation, we will delete the names of respondents to this questionnaire.

We will need your name and postcode in order to check that you are on the Electoral Register as we are consulting specifically with residents who are registered to vote in Gwynedd, in accordance with the requirements of Section 5 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 .

We will only use this information for checking the Electoral Register. It will not be used when analyzing the responses.



## Your details

We will only use your name and postcode for checking the Electoral Register. We will not use them when analyzing the responses.

Full name

Postcode



## Your opinion



**What voting system would you want Cyngor Gwynedd to use to elect Councillors?**

Choose one of the following

Simple Majority System (first past the post)

Single Transferable Vote System (proportional representation)

No opinion

Explain why



**What is your opinion on the effect the voting method you have chosen would have on the Welsh language, specifically:**

**opportunities for people to use the Welsh language**

Choose one of the following answers

- Positive impact
- Little positive impact
- No impact
- Little negative impact
- Negative impact

**not to treat Welsh less favourably than English**

Choose one of the following answers

- Positive impact
- Little positive impact
- No impact
- Little negative impact
- Negative impact



Provide any comments



**What is your opinion on the impact that the voting method you have chosen would have on people who face socio-economic disadvantage?**

Socio-economic disadvantage means poverty of all kinds – financial poverty, digital poverty, living far from services etc.

Positive impact

Little positive impact

No impact

Little negative impact

Negative impact

Provide any comments



## About you

Answering the following questions will help us see if we have collected the views of a variety of people and given everyone from all backgrounds a chance to take part. You do not have to answer them.

Any information you provide is strictly confidential. The information will only be used for statistical analysis.

If you are completing this survey on behalf of an organisation, do not complete this section.

### Sex

Choose one of the following answers

- Man / Male
- Woman / Female
- I identify in a different way
- I prefer not to say

### Note your age group

Choose one of the following answers

- 15 years old or younger
- 16 - 24 years old
- 25 - 34 years old
- 35 - 44 years old
- 45 - 54 years old
- 55 - 64 years old
- 65 - 74 years old
- 75 - 84 years old
- 85+ years old
- I prefer not to say



### How would you describe your skills in Welsh?

Check all that apply

- Speak, read and write fluently
- Speak, read and write, but not very confidently
- Speak, read and write – I'm learning
- Speak, but can't read or write
- Can't speak or understand Welsh
- I prefer not to say

Other

### Nationality or national identity?

Choose one of the following answers

- Welsh
- English
- Scottish
- Northern Irish
- British
- I prefer not to say

Other



### What is your race?

Choose one of the following answers

- White
- Black / African / Caribbean
- Asian
- Gypsy / Irish Traveller
- Mixed / several ethnic groups
- I prefer not to say

Other

### What is your religion?

Choose one of the following answers

- No religion
- Christian
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Sikh
- I prefer not to say

Other



**Which of these best describes you?**

(You do not need to answer this question if you are under 16)

Heterosexual / Straight

Gay man

Gay woman / lesbian

Bisexual

I prefer not to say

Other

**Has your gender identification changed from that assigned to you at birth? (for example are you trans or transgender etc)**

(You do not need to answer this question if you are under 16 years old)

Yes

No

I prefer not to say

**Section 6 (1) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person is disabled if:**

- a. The person has a physical or mental impairment,**
- b. and the impairment has a substantial and long-term effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.**

**Using this definition, do you consider yourself a disabled person?**

Choose one of the following answers

Yes

No

I prefer not to say



## Consultation - Possible changes to the voting system for the election of County Councillors

882 individuals who are local government constituents in Gwynedd responded to the consultation. This equates to 1% of Gwynedd electors. The characteristics of the respondents can be seen in **Appendix 1**.

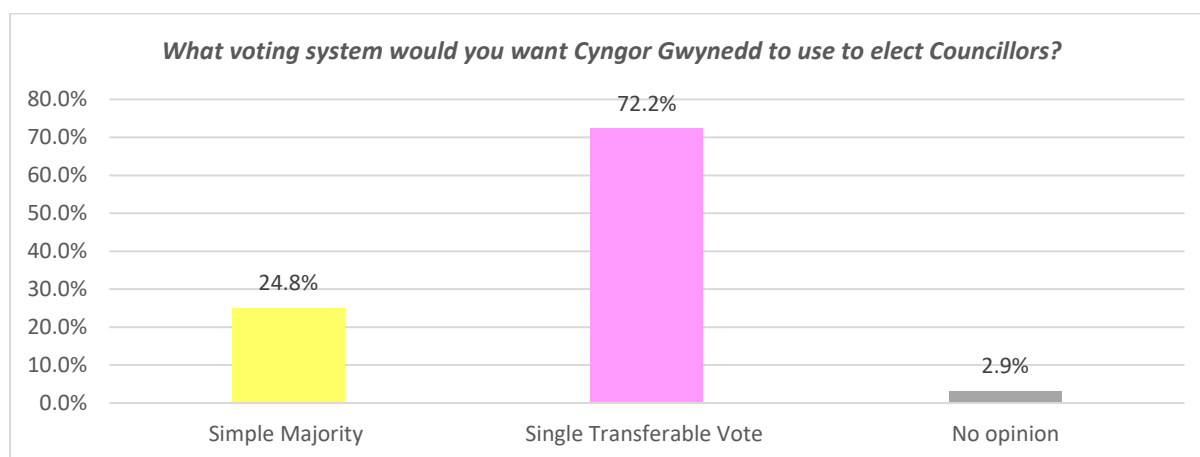
13 City/Town/Community Councils also responded. A list of them can be found in **Appendix 2**.

The results of the individuals and the City/Town/Community Councils are reported separately.

### 1. Electorate Response

**What voting system would you want Cyngor Gwynedd to use to elect Councillors?**

	Number of individuals	Percentage
Simple majority (first past the post )	219	24.8%
Single Transferable Vote (proportional voting or 'proportional representation' system)	637	72.2%
No opinion	26	2.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



If we look at the preferences of the individuals by age group the percentages are as follows.

Age Group	Number in age group	Simple majority	Single transferable vote	No opinion	Total
16 - 24 years old	13	0.0%	69.2%	30.8%	100.0%
25 - 34 years old	28	28.6%	71.4%	0.0%	100.0%
35 - 44 years old	38	21.1%	78.9%	0.0%	100.0%
45 - 54 years old	109	17.4%	80.7%	1.8%	100.0%
55 - 64 years old	245	28.2%	68.6%	3.3%	100.0%
65 - 74 years old	262	25.2%	71.4%	3.4%	100.0%
75 - 84 years old	119	24.4%	74.8%	0.8%	100.0%
85+ years old	12	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
I prefer not to say / Not answered	56	28.6%	67.9%	3.6%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>72.2%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Reasons for their choice

143 respondents did not comment.

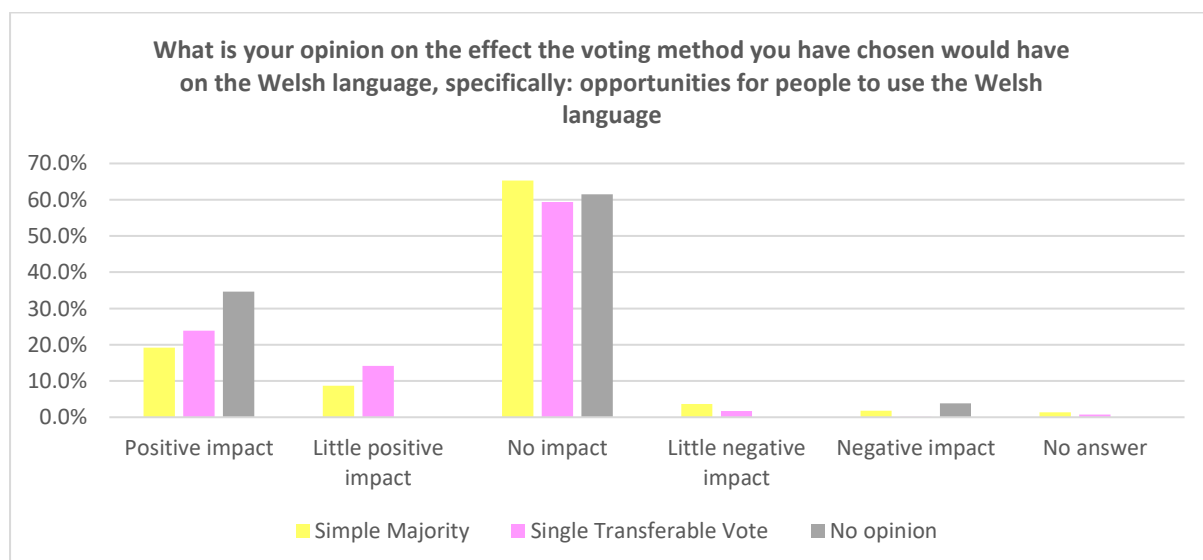
Comment	Simple majority	Single Transferable Vote	No opinion	Total	As a percentage
STV system is fairer and more democratic	0	314	1	315	42.6%
STV system is more representative of the electorate - the voice of all electors counts	0	158	0	158	21.4%
Simple Majority System is simpler and works fine	88	0	0	88	11.9%
Better to vote for one specific person to represent a ward	53	0	1	54	7.3%
STV provides an opportunity for a range of parties to represent a ward	0	40	0	40	5.4%
Relationship between councillor and constituents weakens with STV due to ward size	18	0	3	21	2.8%
STV would encourage more people to vote	0	15	0	15	2.0%
STV will mean fewer unopposed seats	0	14	0	14	1.9%
STV system is going to boost cross-party collaboration	0	12	0	12	1.6%
STV will allow the election of councillors who do not know and live in the ward	6	0	0	6	0.8%
Pros and cons to both systems	0	1	3	4	0.5%
STV would give extremist parties too much say	4	0	0	4	0.5%
Insufficient information about the proposal to change to be able to make a decision	2	0	2	4	0.5%
It should be a decision on an all-Wales level and not individual authorities to change the voting system	2	0	0	2	0.3%
Need to consider Alternative Vote	0	1	0	1	0.1%
There would be a decline in the status of the Welsh language in Gwynedd if STV came into force	1	0	0	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**What is your opinion on the impact that the voting method you have chosen would have on the Welsh language, and specifically on: Opportunities for people to use Welsh**

<b>Simple Majority</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Positive impact	42	19.2%
Some positive impact	19	8.7%
No impact	143	65.3%
Some negative impact	8	3.7%
Negative impact	4	1.8%
Not answered	3	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Single Transferable Vote</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Positive impact	152	23.9%
Some positive impact	90	14.1%
No impact	378	59.3%
Some negative impact	11	1.7%
Negative impact	1	0.2%
Not answered	5	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>No opinion</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Positive impact	9	34.6%
Some positive impact	0	0.0%
No impact	16	61.5%
Some negative impact	0	0.0%
Negative impact	1	3.8%
Not answered	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

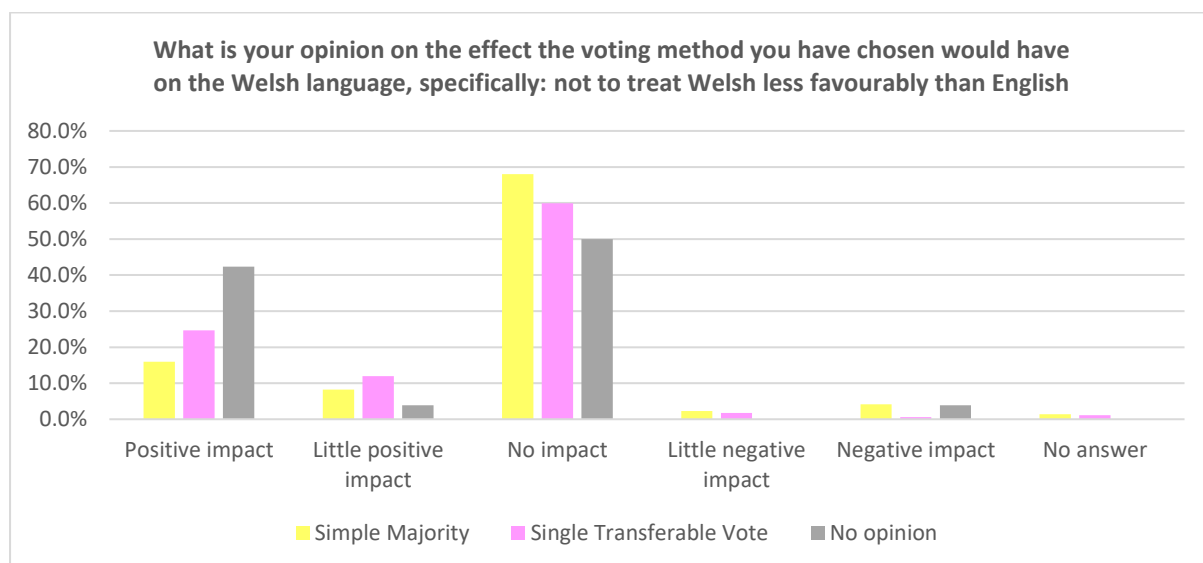


**What is your opinion on the impact that the voting method you have chosen would have on the Welsh language, and specifically on: Not treating Welsh less favourably than English**

<b>Simple Majority</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Positive impact	35	16.0%
Some positive impact	18	8.2%
No impact	149	68.0%
Some negative impact	5	2.3%
Negative impact	9	4.1%
Not answered	3	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Single Transferable Vote</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Positive impact	157	24.6%
Some positive impact	76	11.9%
No impact	382	60.0%
Some negative impact	11	1.7%
Negative impact	4	0.6%
Not answered	7	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>No opinion</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Positive impact	11	42.3%
Some positive impact	1	3.8%
No impact	13	50.0%
Some negative impact	0	0.0%
Negative impact	1	3.8%
Not answered	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



### ***Reasons for their choice***

648 respondents did not comment.

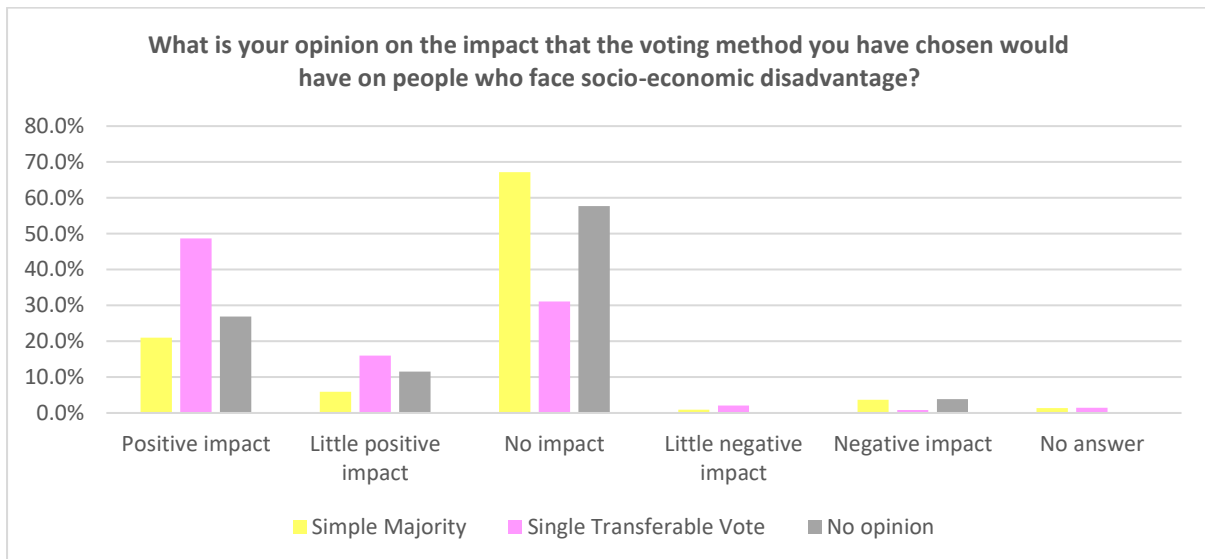
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Simple majority</b>	<b>Single Transferable Vote</b>	<b>No opinion</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>As a percentage</b>
No impact on the Welsh language	22	57	1	80	34.2%
STV will make English and Welsh more equal in importance	0	48	0	48	20.5%
Irrelevant question	20	26	1	47	20.1%
Whatever system is used the candidates have a responsibility to strengthen the use of the Welsh language	6	19	0	25	10.7%
Both languages should have the same status	12	5	0	17	7.3%
STV would favour more fringe parties and this would be less favourable to the Welsh language	7	2	0	9	3.8%
Changing to STV would hopefully give less importance to the status of the Welsh language and more emphasis on work and economy	0	6	0	6	2.6%
Gwynedd to innovate by switching to STV system - show the way to the Senedd and Westminster	0	2	0	2	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### ***What is your opinion on the impact the voting method you have chosen would have on people facing a socio-economic disadvantage?***

<b>Simple Majority</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Positive impact	46	21.0%
Some positive impact	13	5.9%
No impact	147	67.1%
Some negative impact	2	0.9%
Negative impact	8	3.7%
Not answered	3	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Single Transferable Vote</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Positive impact	310	48.7%
Some positive impact	102	16.0%
No impact	198	31.1%
Some negative impact	13	2.0%
Negative impact	5	0.8%
Not answered	9	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

No opinion	Number	Percentage
Positive impact	7	26.9%
Some positive impact	3	11.5%
No impact	15	57.7%
Some negative impact	0	0.0%
Negative impact	1	3.8%
Not answered	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



### ***Reasons for their choice***

642 respondents did not comment.

Comment	Simple majority	Single Transferable Vote	No opinion	Total	As a percentage
STV system ensures those with a socio-economic disadvantage would be represented	0	67	0	67	27.9%
STV system will encourage representation from more diverse candidates	0	29	0	29	12.1%
No impact	15	13	0	28	11.7%
STV system ensures candidates will engage more with the electorate who are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and therefore a better chance of changes being made to help them	0	28	0	28	11.7%
A more complex STV system and therefore negatively affecting those with a socio-economic disadvantage	11	5	0	16	6.7%

STV system encourages those with a socio-economic disadvantage to vote	0	14	0	14	5.8%
Responsibility on the Council to promote and explain the STV system to constituents	0	14	0	14	5.8%
Simple majority allows a vote for who you think is the best person	11	0	0	11	4.6%
Irrelevant question	3	4	1	8	3.3%
Not sure what the impact would be without research after the change	2	5	0	7	2.9%
No 'safe' seats when switching to STV system - so more chances for things to change	0	6	0	6	2.5%
The STV system will reduce councillors' accountability to their constituents	4	0	1	5	2.1%
Having more councillors under the STV system would reduce available resources which in a turn would reduce spending on services	1	2	1	4	1.7%
A simple majority means transport challenges would not be a factor as the councillor was local to them	3	0	0	3	1.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## 2. Response of City / Town / Community Councils

*What voting system would you want Cyngor Gwynedd to use to elect Councillors?*

	Number	Percentage
Simple majority (first past the post)	8	61.5%
Single Transferable Vote (proportional voting or 'proportional representation' system)	3	23.1%
No opinion	2	15.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*What is your opinion on the impact that the voting method you have chosen would have on the Welsh language, and specifically on: Not treating Welsh less favourably than English*

	Simple Majority	STV	No opinion	Total	Percentage
Positive impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Some positive impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
No impact	5	2	0	7	53.8%
Some negative impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Negative impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Not answered	3	1	2	6	46.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*What is your opinion on the impact that the voting method you have chosen would have on the Welsh language, and specifically on: Not treating Welsh less favourably than English*

	Simple Majority	STV	No opinion	Total	Percentage
Positive impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Some positive impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
No impact	4	2	0	6	46.2%
Some negative impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Negative impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Not answered	4	1	2	7	53.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*What is your opinion on the impact the voting method you have chosen would have on people facing a socio-economically disadvantage?*

	Simple Majority	STV	No opinion	Total	Percentage
Positive impact	1	0	0	1	7.7%
Some positive impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
No impact	4	2	0	6	46.2%
Some negative impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Negative impact	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Not answered	3	1	2	6	46.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**Comments provided:**

**In favour of a Single Transferable Vote**

**Caernarfon Town Council**

*"The Council is in favour of the principle as it is a much fairer system in terms of representing the views of constituents. The Council supports larger wards with a higher number of councillors because a system with only 3 councillors to a ward is less proportional. When creating wards, I would favour that they be created based on towns and their natural countryside. This Council is keen for the Welsh Government to make the decision and ensure the same procedure in all Councils.*

*1) To reduce the confusion of different systems in different places, and to create a practice with the system among electors and election officials*

*2) To reduce the requirement for councillors to vote against the system that elected them, 3) To pass the change with a simple majority instead of two thirds."*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Llanberis and Nant Peris Community Council**

*"As a Community Council we are generally supportive of the Single Transferable Vote, but want to express reservations about increasing ward sizes. We note the possibility of introducing the element of transferability without increasing ward size. Such a system is referred to as the Alternative Vote (AV).*

*Transferability gives electors the opportunity to express broader views about candidates than is possible under the current Simple Majority system, and ensures that a majority of electors are satisfied with the winning candidate. It also removes the incentive to vote tactically. We deem these elements as positive features of the Single Transferable Vote system and the Alternative Vote system, compared to the Simple Majority.*

*When increasing ward size, there is a risk of weakening the relationship between County Councillors and the Communities they represent. Currently, we have one County Councillor in Llanberis who represents our Community only. It is customary that the County Councillor is also a member of the Community Council. This system ensures that there is a strong relationship between the Community Council and our representative on Cyngor Gwynedd, and eases links between the Community Council and the County Council.*

*We are concerned about the impact of changing to Multi-Member Wards on the strong relationship between the community in Llanberis and Nant Peris, the Community Council and the County Council. It would be possible to alleviate these concerns if further changes are introduced along with the adoption of the Single Transferable Vote system. For example, I would like to urge that County Councillors have a duty to attend meetings of all Community Councils within their wards.*

*In summary, our first choice as a Community Council would be the Alternative Vote, which combines the strengths of the Single Transferable Vote with the benefit of continuing with only one County Councillor representing our community. If the Single Transferable Vote was adopted, I would urge that further policies be introduced to protect the relationship between County and Community Councillors."*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Pentir Community Council**

*"I would like to confirm that Pentir Community Council discussed this matter at their meeting last night and that they are supportive of the SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE system"*

**In favour of a Simple Majority**

**Llanfair Community Council**

*"Council members believe that this system works fine and is uncomplicated"*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Talsarnau Community Council**

*"This system is simple and works fine"*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Harlech Community Council**

*"This system works fine"*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dyffryn Ardudwy and Talybont Community Council**

*"This system works fine and does not need to be changed because this area is rural, the other system would not work"*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Llannor Community Council**

*"The introduction of a STV voting system would not lead to greater diversity in local politics. On the contrary, it would favour candidates standing up for large, organised political parties at the expense of independent candidates. A new voting system would not encourage more to stand for election because it is dependent on a party system more than anything. The Council believes that detailed research should be carried out to establish why individuals are unwilling to stand for election before intervening with the voting system.*

*The current system ensures a clear and direct relationship between elected representatives and their constituents in reasonably sized wards that are relatively meaningful geographical units. The introduction of a STV system, and increasing ward sizes, would introduce distance and alienation between elected representatives and residents of their wards and lead to an increase in indifference about local elections.*

*Furthermore, carrying out this consultation without submitting any robust information about the size of the electoral wards is misleading. We can assume that changing the voting system would go hand in hand with the creation of huge electoral wards in rural areas, leading to unfamiliarity and alienation between elected representatives and the people they are supposed to represent.*

*It follows from the above three points, that the introduction of the STV system could adversely affect the Welsh language."*

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Llandwrog Community Council**

*"It is believed that problems are passed from one member to another and no one accepts responsibility with Multi-Member arrangements. Without the establishment of multi-member wards there is no point in changing the current system."*

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Tudweiliog Community Council**

*"It's likely to lead to less of an independent voice which is the last thing we need. The current system is representative of local opinion."*

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Llanuwchllyn Community Council**

No further comments

#### **No opinion**

#### **Llanystumdwy Community Council**

*"We need more information about the type of Single Transferable Vote you are proposing, and also how this can affect the boundaries of the Wards. It would be better to have a consultation on a specific idea(s). The views of the Councillors were as follows:-*

- *They did not know what the new boundaries were yet.*
- *Lack of accountability.*
- *If 8 councillors would be selected for Dwyfor, who are we going to ask for support and advice?*
- *No one will represent a specific Ward as it currently exists.*
- *A Councillor will not have to live in the Ward as it currently exists.*
- *It is likely that there will be no ward in Llanystumdwy as it currently exists, therefore, we will have no one specific to turn to who has an understanding about the needs of the area.*
- *In terms of linguistic impact, there is a risk of losing ground in the long-term.*
- *This resembles national politics more than local politics.*
- *The Llanystumdwy area is already large so it is concerning to think the area will then get bigger.*

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Barmouth Town Council**

No further comments

## Appendix 1 – Characteristics of respondents

<b>Your gender:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Man / Male	474	53.7%
Woman / Female	344	39.0%
I identify in a different way	6	0.7%
I prefer not to say	47	5.3%
Not answered	11	1.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Your age group:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
16 - 24 years old	13	1.5%
25 - 34 years old	28	3.2%
35 - 44 years old	38	4.3%
45 - 54 years old	109	12.4%
55 - 64 years old	245	27.8%
65 - 74 years old	262	29.7%
75 - 84 years old	119	13.5%
85 + years old	12	1.4%
I prefer not to say	46	5.2%
Not answered	10	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Welsh Language Skills:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Speaking, reading and writing fluently	257	29.1%
Speaking, reading and writing - currently learning	151	17.1%
Speaking, reading and writing, but not very confident	100	11.3%
Speaking, but unable to read or write	44	5.0%
Unable to speak or understand Welsh	136	15.4%
Other	78	8.8%
I prefer not to say	101	11.5%
Not answered	15	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Your Nationality/National Identity:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Welsh	337	38.2%
English	137	15.5%
British	291	33.0%
Scottish	9	1.0%
Northern Irish	1	0.1%
Other	42	4.8%
I prefer not to say	54	6.1%
Not answered	11	1.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Your Race:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
White	778	88.2%
Asian	1	0.1%
Mixed / several ethnic groups	7	0.8%
Gypsy / Irish traveller	1	0.1%
Other	8	0.9%
I prefer not to say	73	8.3%
Not answered	14	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Your Religion:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Christian	345	39.1%
Buddhist	6	0.7%
Other	40	4.5%
No religion	392	44.4%
I prefer not to say	87	9.9%
Not answered	12	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Your Sexuality:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Heterosexual / Straight	723	82.0%
Gay man	9	1.0%
Gay woman/lesbian	6	0.7%
Bisexual	13	1.5%
Other	17	1.9%
I prefer not to say	100	11.3%
Not answered	14	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Has your gender identity changed from when you were born? (for example, you are transgender or trans etc.)*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	15	1.7%
No	773	87.6%
I prefer not to say	75	8.5%
Not answered	19	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Using the definition in Section 6 (1) of the Equality Act 2010, do you consider yourself a disabled person?*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	120	13.6%
No	670	76.0%
I prefer not to say	76	8.6%
Not answered	16	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Appendix 2 – List of Community / Town / City Councils that responded to the consultation**

Barmouth Town Council

Caernarfon Town Council

Dyffryn Ardudwy and Talybont Community Council

Harlech Community Council

Llanberis and Nant Peris Community Council

Llandwrog Community Council

Llanfair Community Council

Llannor Community Council

Llanuwchllyn Community Council

Llanystumdwy Community Council

Pentir Community Council

Talsarnau Community Council

Tudweiliog Community Council

# Equality Impact Assessment

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or [DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru) for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

## I Details

### I.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Gwynedd Council Electoral System Review Section 8 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

### I.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

Deciding on moving from first past the post system to proportional system of the Single Transferable Vote

### I.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Iwan Evans – Head of Legal Services

**1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?**

First version based on consultation held on 15 July 2024

**2) Action**

**2.1 Who are the partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?**

Gwynedd Local Government Electors  
Gwynedd Town and Community Councils  
Elected members

**2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics?**

A wide-ranging consultation was held during the period 15 July 2024 to 15 September 2024 which included questions about language and equality.

**2.3 What was the result of the engagement?**

The consultation has not identified any negative impacts on changing the electoral system



**2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?**

Information on the proposed voting systems has been collected and assessed in a comprehensive report

**2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?**

None highlighted.

**3) Identifying the Impact**

**3.1 The Council has to give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics? You are welcome to any other characteristics if you wish.**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>What type of impact?*</b>	<b>In what way? What is the evidence?</b>
<b>Race (including nationality)</b>	none	The effect appears neutral
<b>The Welsh language</b>	none	The effect appears neutral
<b>Disability</b>	none	The effect appears neutral
<b>Sex</b>	none	The effect appears neutral
<b>Age</b>	none	The effect appears neutral

<b>Sexual orientation</b>	none	The effect appears neutral
<b>Religion or belief (or non-belief)</b>	none	The effect appears neutral
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	none	The effect appears neutral
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	none	The effect appears neutral
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	none	The effect appears neutral

\* Delete as appropriate

**3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.**

<b>General Duties of the Equality Act</b>	<b>Does it have an impact?*</b>	<b>In what way? What is the evidence?</b>
<b>Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>	No	The effect mentioned in 3.1 is not thought to be likely to lead to discrimination, harassment or persecution.
<b>Promoting equal opportunities</b>	No	The effect mentioned in 3.1 is not thought likely to affect equal opportunities.
<b>Encouraging good relationships</b>	No	The effect mentioned in 3.1 is not thought likely to affect equal opportunities.

\* to be deleted as appropriate

**3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Mesur y Gymraeg (Wales) 2011), to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English, and that every opportunity is taken to promote the Welsh language (beyond bilingual service delivery) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?**

The Local Government election system in Gwynedd is administered in accordance with the requirements of the Measure . Adopting a new regime or keeping the current system would not affect the baseline situation here.

**3.4 What other measures or changes you might include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to positively impact people's opportunities to use Welsh, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects the policy/practice may have on the Welsh language?**

N/A

**3.5 How does the proposal show that you have given due attention to the need to address disparity from the cause of socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about with closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone).**

The proposal is a statutory choice between voting systems. In relation to voters casting their vote the change would not be significant in terms of experience. Similar systems have been used in other elections. Investment is made in advertising and information sharing campaigns for each election aimed at increasing understanding and participation across the whole community.

**3.6 What other measures or changes you may include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have due regard to the need to reduce unequal outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Equalities Act?**

N/A

#### 4) Analysing the results

**4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty and what is the reason for this?**

The effect appears neutral.

**4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty and what is the reason for this?**

No, it is not.

#### 4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	x
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	

**4.4 What steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

See above regarding arrangements for holding elections .

**4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.**

N/A

**5) Monitoring**

**5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?**

Participation will be monitored in all elections.