

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**.

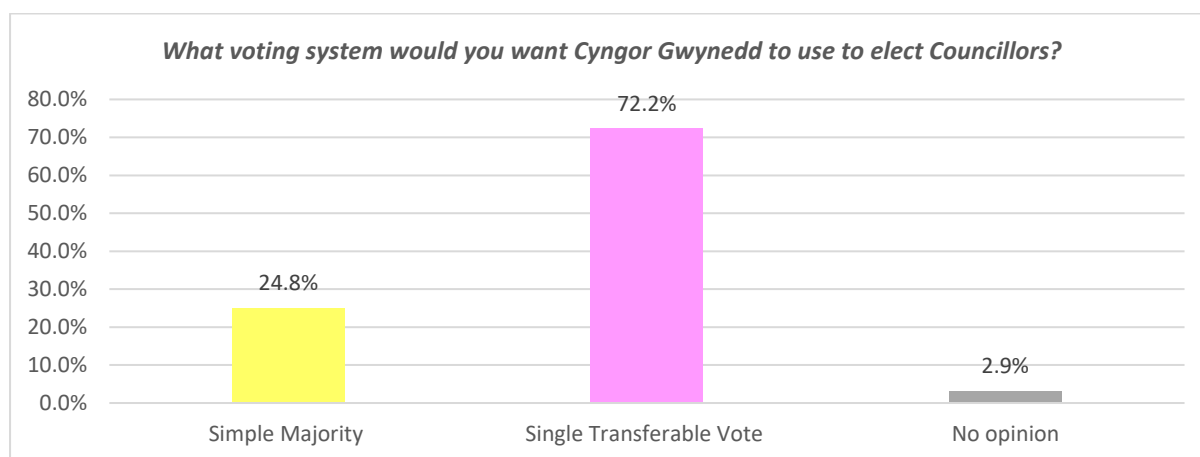
13 City/Town/Community Councils also responded. A list of them can be found in **Appendix 2**.

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%
Total	882	100.0%



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%
Total	882	24.8%	72.2%	2.9%	100.0%

Reasons for their choice

143 respondents did not comment.

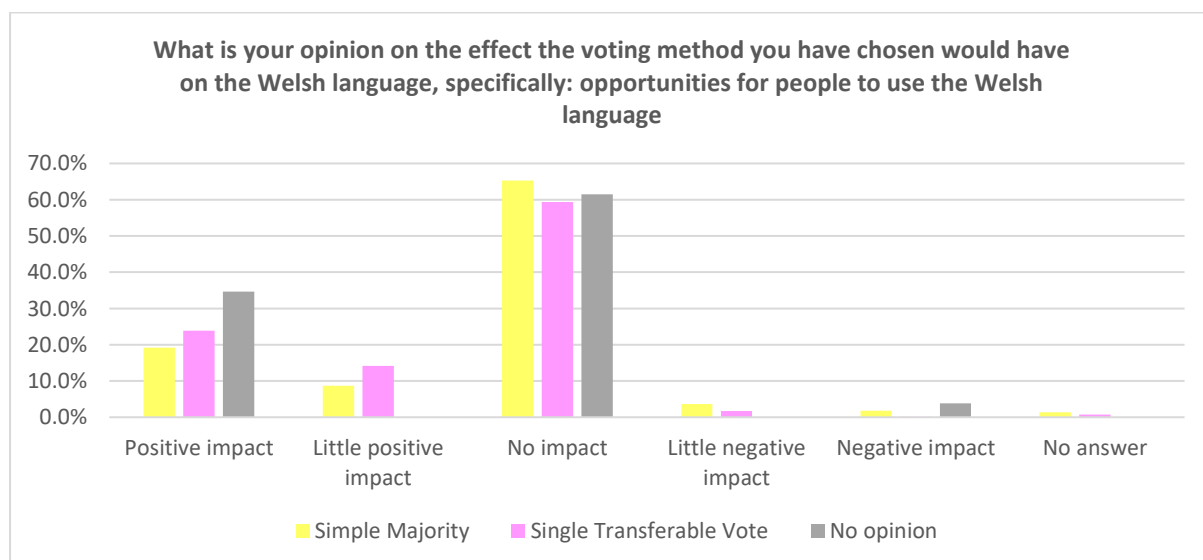
Comment	Simple majority	Single Transferable Vote	No opinion	Total	As a percentage
STV system is fairer and more democratic	0	314	1	315	42.6%
STV system is more representative of the electorate - the voice of all electors counts	0	158	0	158	21.4%
Simple Majority System is simpler and works fine	88	0	0	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%
Total	174	555	10	739	100.0%

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

Simple Majority	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	219	100.0%

Single Transferable Vote	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	637	100.0%

No opinion	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	26	100.0%

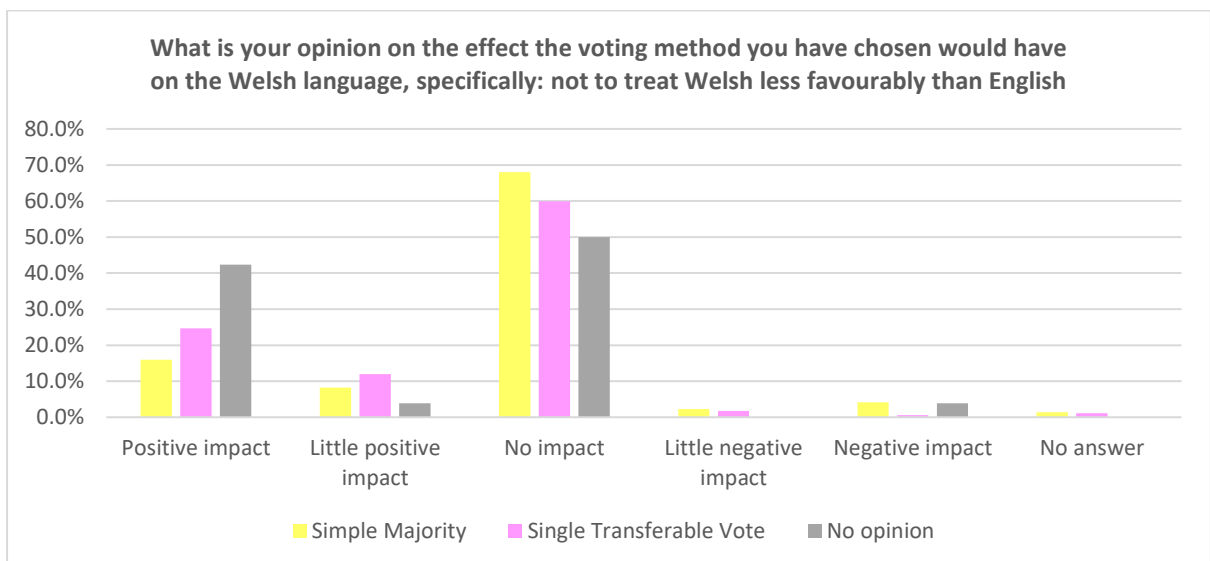


What is your opinion on the impact that the voting method you have chosen would have on the Welsh language, and specifically on: Not treating Welsh less favourably than English

Simple Majority	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	219	100.0%

Single Transferable Vote	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	637	100.0%

No opinion	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	26	100.0%



Reasons for their choice

648 respondents did not comment.

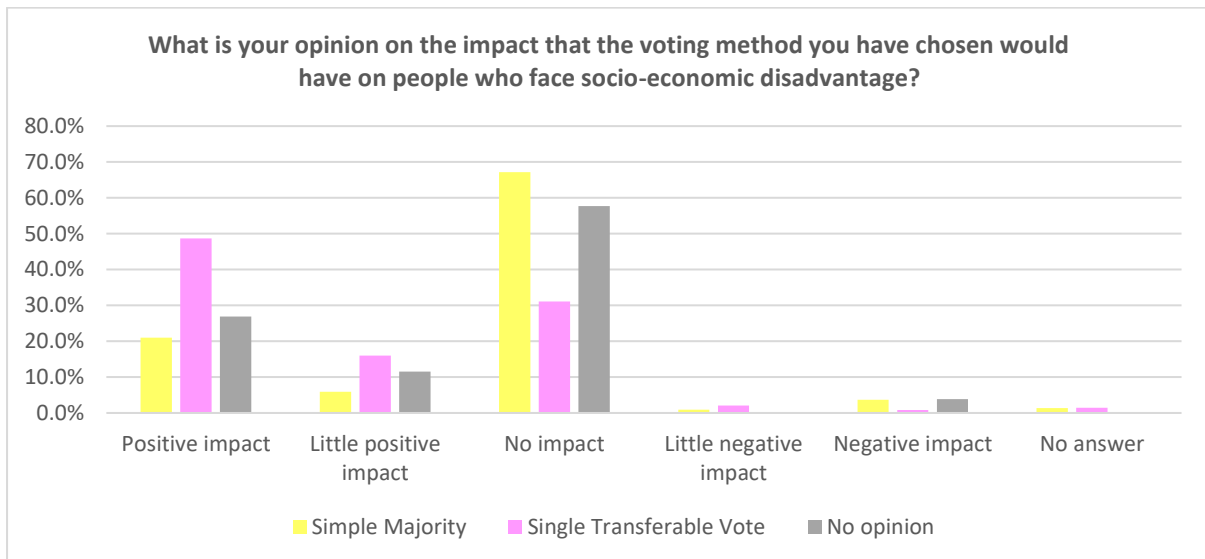
Comment	Simple majority	Single Transferable Vote	No opinion	Total	As a percentage
No impact on the Welsh language	22	57	1	80	34.2%
STV will make English and Welsh more equal in importance	0	48	0	48	20.5%
Irrelevant question	20	26	1	47	20.1%
Whatever system is used the candidates have a responsibility 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%
Total	67	165	2	234	100.0%

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

Simple Majority	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	219	100.0%

Single Transferable Vote	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	637	100.0%

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%
Total	26	100.0%



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%
Total	50	187	3	240	100.0%

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%
Total	13	100.0%

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%
Total	8	3	2	13	100.0%

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%
Total	8	3	2	13	100.0%

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%
Total	8	3	2	13	100.0%

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

Your gender:	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	882	100.0%

Your age group:	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	882	100.0%

Welsh Language Skills:	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	882	100.0%

Your Nationality/National Identity:	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	882	100.0%

Your Race:	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	882	100.0%

Your Religion:	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	882	100.0%

Your Sexuality:	Number	Percentage
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%
Total	882	100.0%

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

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

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

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

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