

Results of Council Tax Premium Consultation on Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties – October 2022

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1. Introduction

The public consultation was launched on 30th September and was open until 28th October. The questionnaire was posted on the Council's website with letters sent to all owners of second homes and long-term empty properties, and reminders posted on the Council's social media pages.

7,330 responses were received to the questionnaire. There were 7,277 online questionnaire responses and 53 paper responses. This is the largest number of responses the Council has seen to any consultation in recent years.

The consultation was split into two sections, one for second homes and the other for long-term empty properties.

2. Consultation responses

There were 7,330 responses to the consultation.

2.1 Your situation?

The first question of the questionnaire asked respondents to select one or more statements describing their situation. Here are the number, and percentage, of respondents who chose the different statements:

Situation	Number	%age
My main home is in Gwynedd	3,518	48.0%
My main home is outside Gwynedd	2,690	36.7%
I have a second home in Gwynedd	3,483	47.5%
I have a long-term empty property in Gwynedd	237	3.2%

Since individual respondents could be in more than one of the above situations, it is easier to categorize the respondents as follows:

Category	Number	%age
With no second home or empty property in Gwynedd*	3,646	49.7%
Own a second home in Gwynedd (but no long-term empty properties)	3,447	47.0%
Owning a long-term empty property in Gwynedd (but no second home)	201	2.7%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property in Gwynedd	36	0.5%
Total respondents	7,330	100.0%

**This category can include respondents who live in and outside Gwynedd, who do not have a second home or long-term empty property in Gwynedd*

Just over half of respondents therefore (50.3%, N=3,684) owned either a second home or a long-term empty dwelling in Gwynedd (or both).

Within this figure 47.0% owned a second home, 2.7% owned a long-term empty dwelling, and 0.5% owned both (i.e. a long-term empty dwelling and a second home in Gwynedd).

49.7% of respondents did not own a second home or long-term empty dwelling in Gwynedd. Within this figure, 8.5% (N=625) also indicated that their main home was outside Gwynedd.

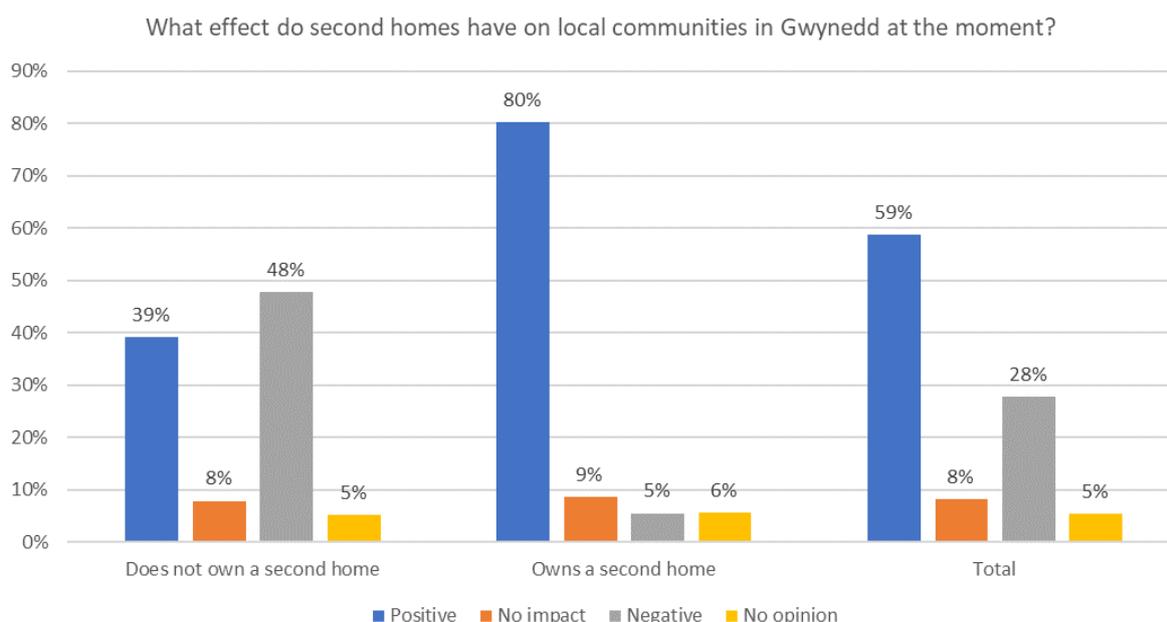
3. Results for Second Homes

This part looks specifically at the consequences of the questions about second homes.

3.1 What effect do second homes have on local communities in Gwynedd at the moment?

In total, over half of respondents (58.7%, N=4,304) thought that second homes were currently having a positive impact on local communities, while 27.7% (N=2,030) thought they were having a negative impact, with 8.2% (N=603) thinking they were having no impact. 5.4% (N=393) of respondents had no opinion on this.

However, by looking at differences between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, a significant difference in opinion is seen as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

The table below details the responses by category, and shows that 80.5% of respondents who own a second home think second homes currently have a positive effect on local communities, while less than half (39.4%) of respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property are of

this opinion. 48.7% of respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property think second homes are currently having a negative impact on local communities, while only 5.3% of respondents who own a second home are of this opinion.

The responses of those who own long-term empty properties are found to be quite equal, with slightly more (35.3%) feeling that second homes are currently having a positive impact on local communities.

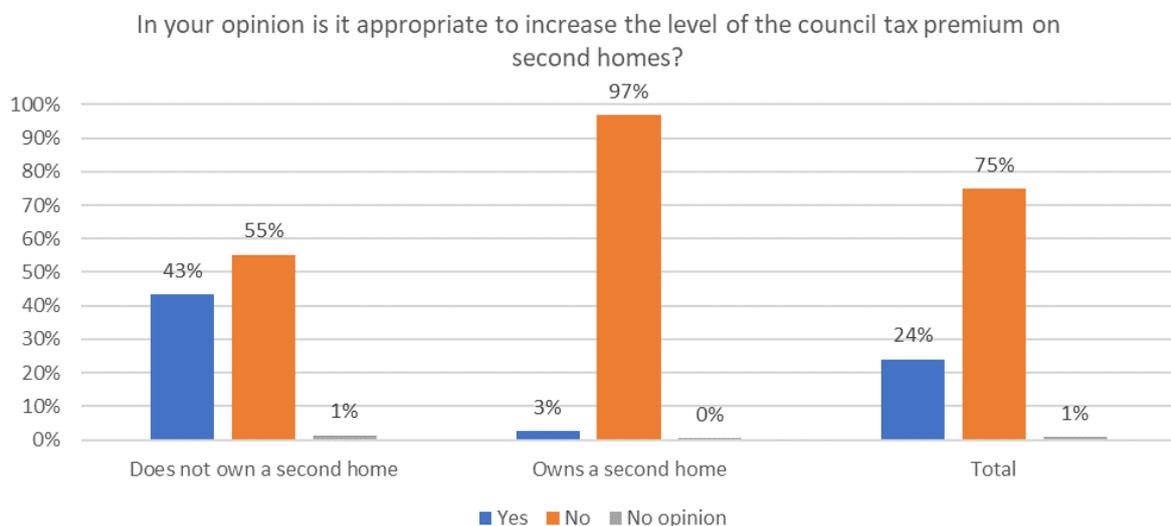
Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and second homes the view is again more divided but with the majority (55.6%) believing second homes are currently having a positive impact.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,437	39.4%	275	7.5%	1,776	48.7%	158	4.3%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	2,776	80.5%	298	8.6%	184	5.3%	189	5.5%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	71	35.3%	27	13.4%	64	31.8%	39	19.4%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	20	55.6%	3	8.3%	6	16.7%	7	19.4%	36	100.0%
Total	4,304	58.7%	603	8.2%	2,030	27.7%	393	5.4%	7,330	100.0%

3.2 Currently the Council Tax Premium on second homes is 100%. The Council is considering whether to increase the level of the Council Tax Premium. Do you think this is appropriate?

In total, three-quarters of respondents (75.0%, N=5,497) considered it not appropriate to increase the level of Council Tax Premium on second homes. 24.1% (N=1,764) thought it appropriate to increase it, with 0.9% (N=69) not having an opinion.

However, by separating the answers between respondents who own a second home and those who do not (chart below), there is some difference of opinion with the overwhelming majority of respondents who own a second home opposing increasing the premium level. Among respondents who do not own a second home the view was more divided, but with a majority here also of the view that it would not be appropriate to increase the premium.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

The table below details the responses by category, and shows that an overwhelming majority (96.9%) of respondents who own a second home oppose increasing the level of premium on second homes, with a smaller majority (54.1%) of respondents not owning a second home nor a long-term empty property sharing the same view. 44.6% of respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property thought increasing the level of premium on second homes would be appropriate, but only 2.7% of second home owners we of this opinion.

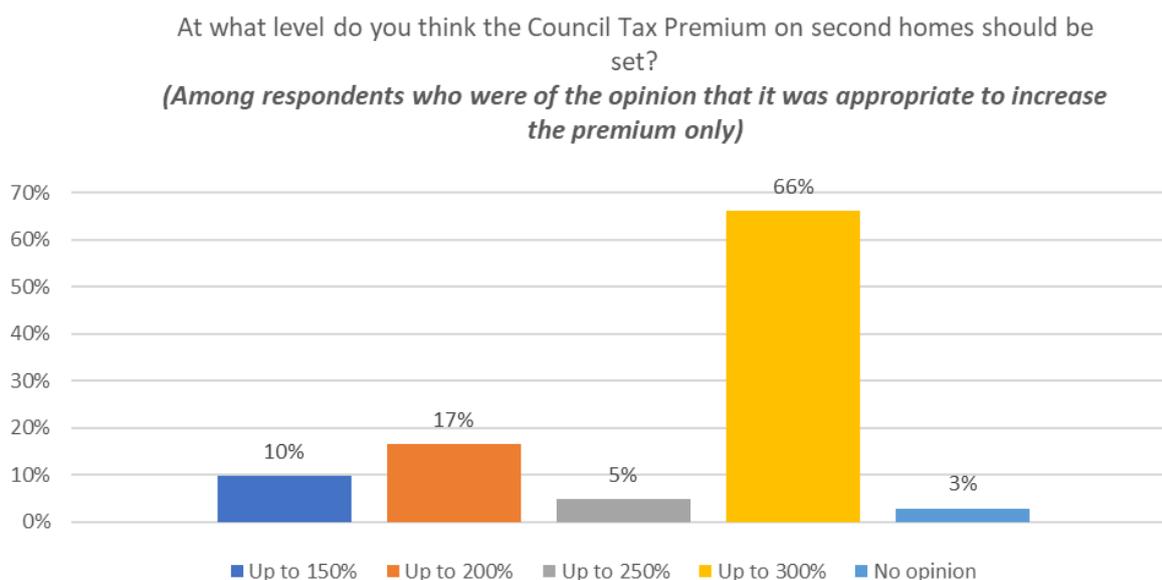
A majority (76.1%) of respondents who own long-term empty properties also opposed increasing the premium on second homes. Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and second homes, 88.9% opposed increasing the premium on second homes.

	Yes		No		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,626	44.6%	1,973	54.1%	47	1.3%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	94	2.7%	3,339	96.9%	14	0.4%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	42	20.9%	153	76.1%	6	3.0%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	2	5.6%	32	88.9%	2	5.6%	36	100.0%
Total	1,764	24.1%	5,497	75.0%	69	0.9%	7,330	100.0%

3.3 At what level do you think the Council Tax Premium on second homes should be set?

There was an opportunity for the 1,764 respondents who thought it would be appropriate to increase the council tax premium level on second homes to then give their views on the level at which it should be set.

Among these respondents, about two-thirds (66.1%, N=1,166) believed the premium should be increased by up to 300% with a further 16.6% (N=292) believing it should be set up to 200% (chart below).



The full results by respondent category are shown in the table below but it should be noted that as many respondents who own a second home / long-term empty property were not in favour of increasing the premium at all, the percentages in these categories were based on small numbers.

	Up to 150%		Up to 200%		Up to 250%		Up to 300%		No opinion		Total
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	124	7.6%	268	16.5%	82	5.0%	1,119	68.8%	33	2.0%	1,626
Own a second home	44	46.8%	19	20.2%	1	1.1%	20	21.3%	10	10.6%	94
Own a long-term empty property	3	7.1%	5	11.9%	2	4.8%	26	61.9%	6	14.3%	42
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2
Total	171	9.7%	292	16.6%	85	4.8%	1,166	66.1%	50	2.8%	1,764

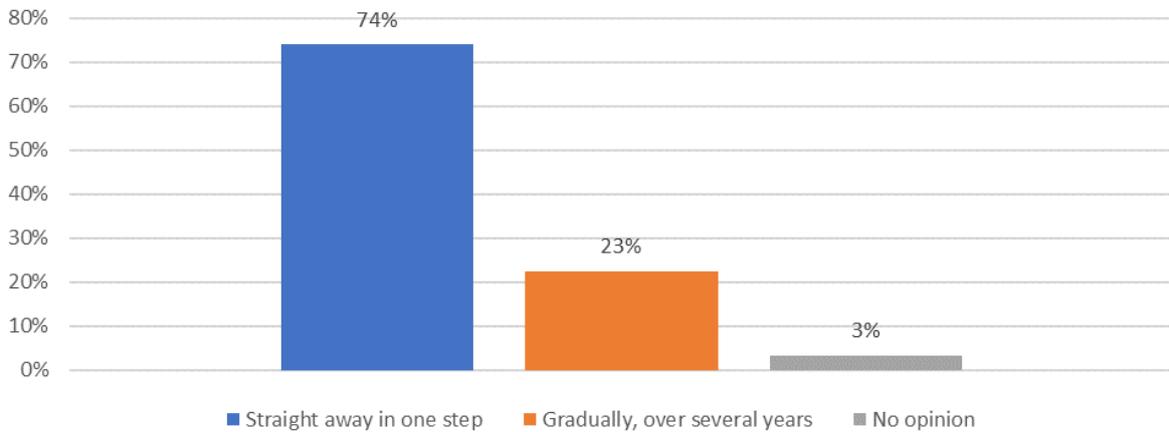
Question only relevant to respondents who supported increasing the premium on second homes

3.4 How should the Council Tax Premium increase for second homes be introduced?

There was also an opportunity for the 1,764 respondents who were in favour of increasing the council tax increase on second homes to give their views on how the increase should be introduced.

Among these respondents, around three-quarters (74.1%, N=1,308) believed the premium should be increased immediately in a single step, with 22.5% (N=397) believing it should be phased in over several years (chart below).

How should the Council Tax Premium on second homes be introduced?
 (Among respondents who were of the opinion that it was appropriate to increase the premium only)



Again, the full results by respondent category are shown below but noting again that since many respondents who own a second home / long-term empty property were not in favour of increasing the premium at all, the percentages within these categories were based on small numbers.

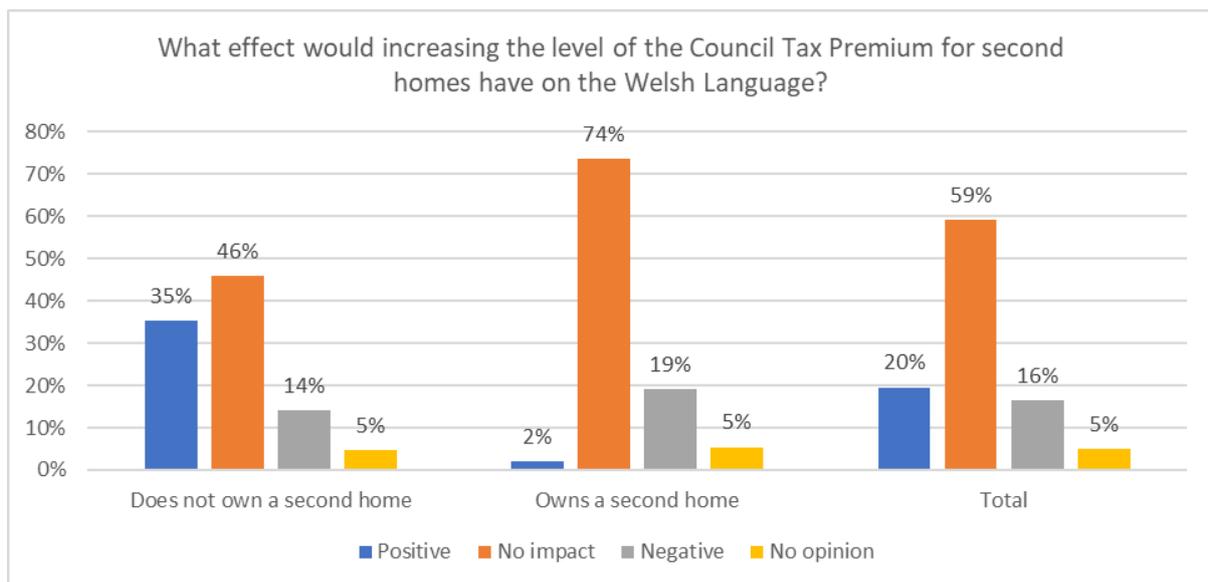
	Immediately, in one step		Gradually, over several year		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,256	77.2%	320	19.7%	50	3.1%	1,626	100.0%
Own a second home	26	27.7%	61	64.9%	7	7.4%	94	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	25	59.5%	15	35.7%	2	4.8%	42	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	-	-	2	100.0%
Total	1,308	74.1%	397	22.5%	59	3.3%	1,764	100.0%

Question only relevant to respondents who were in favour of increasing the premium on second homes

3.5 What impact would increasing the level of Council Tax Premium for second homes have on the Welsh language?

In total over half of respondents (59.0%, N=4,327) felt that the level of premium on second homes would have no impact on the Welsh language. The remaining responses were pretty even with 19.5% (N=1,432) thinking it would have a positive impact on the Welsh language and 16.5% (N=1,207) thinking it would have a negative impact.

However, looking at differences between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, there is some difference in opinion as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

The table below details the response by category, and shows that 73.9% of respondents who own a second home believe that increasing the level of premium would have no impact on the Welsh language, with 18.7% believing that increasing the premium would have a negative impact.

Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property opinion is somewhat more divided with 45.6% believing it would not have an impact on the Welsh language, 36.4% believing it would have a positive impact and 13.8% believing it would have a negative impact.

Among those who own long-term empty properties the majority (52.2%) felt that increasing the premium would not have an impact on the Welsh language.

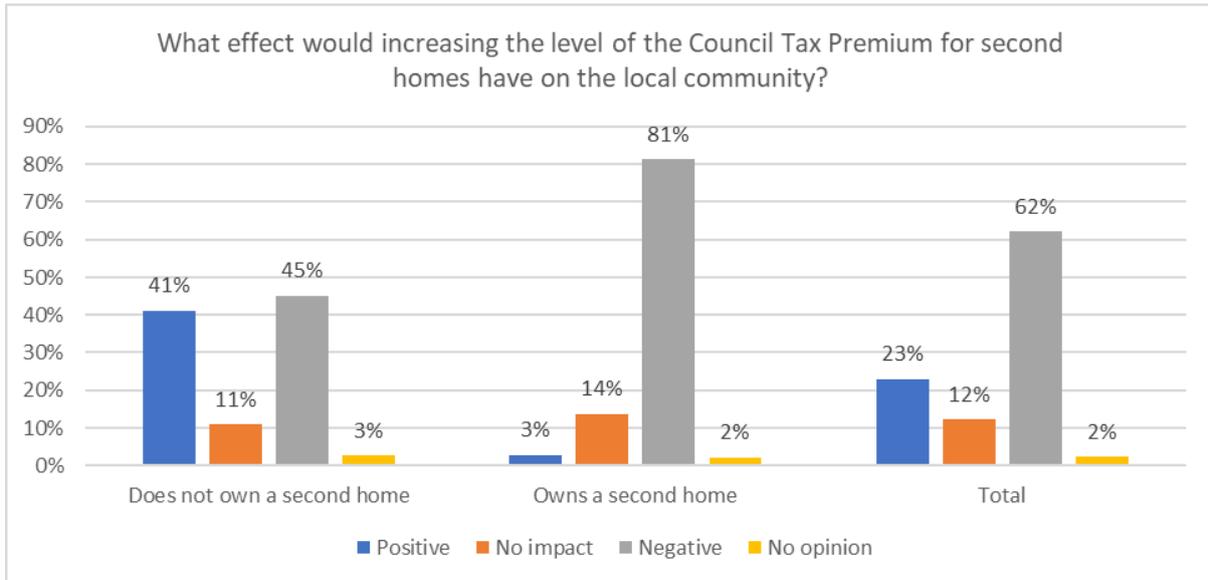
Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and a second home, half (50.0%) believed increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the Welsh language and a third (33.3%) believed it would have no impact.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Own neither a second home nor empty property	1,328	36.4%	1,661	45.6%	502	13.8%	155	4.3%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	68	2.0%	2,549	73.9%	646	18.7%	184	5.3%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	33	16.4%	105	52.2%	41	20.4%	22	10.9%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	3	8.3%	12	33.3%	18	50.0%	3	8.3%	36	100.0%
Total	1,432	19.5%	4,327	59.0%	1,207	16.5%	364	5.0%	7,330	100.0%

3.6 What effect would increasing the level of the Council Tax Premium for second homes have on the local community?

In total a majority of respondents (62.3%, N=4,566) thought that increasing the council tax premium on second homes would have a negative impact on the local community. 23.0% (N=1,685) thought increasing the premium would have a positive impact on the local community and 12.3% (N=902) thought it would not have an impact.

However, by looking at differences between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, some difference in opinion is seen as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

The table below details the response by category, and shows that the vast majority (81.4%) of respondents who own a second home believe increasing the premium level would have a negative impact on the local community. 13.7% thought increasing the premium would have no impact.

Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property opinion is very divided with 44.8% believing increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local community, 42.4% believing it would have a positive impact and 10.6% believing there would be no impact.

Among those owning long-term empty properties, the majority (51.2%) felt increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local community.

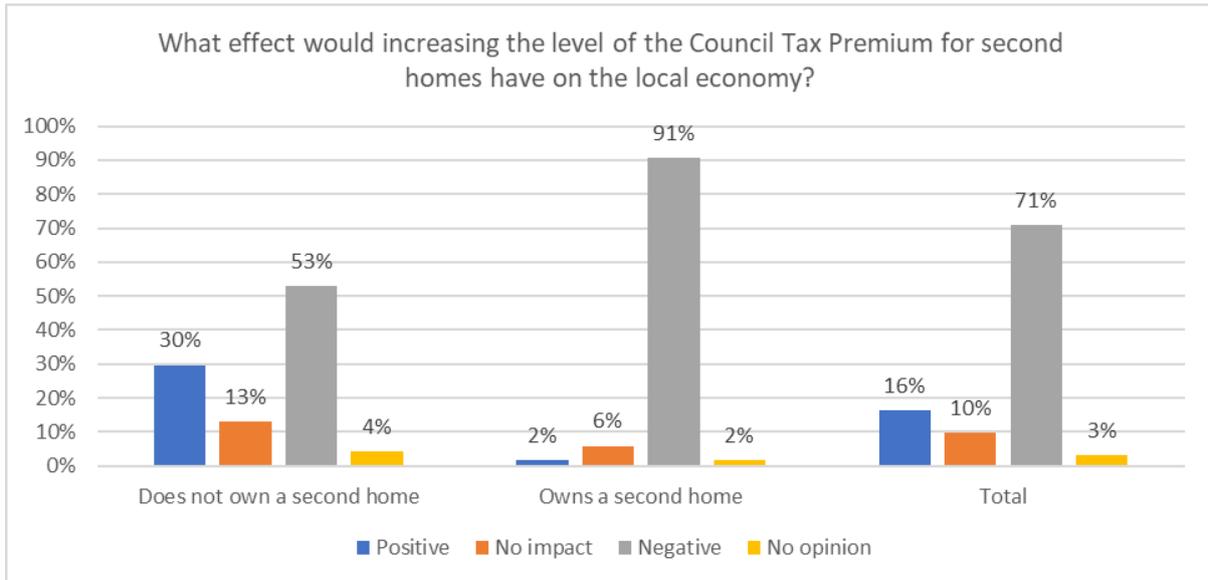
Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and a second home, the majority (63.9%) believed that increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local community.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,547	42.4%	386	10.6%	1,634	44.8%	79	2.2%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	96	2.8%	472	13.7%	2,806	81.4%	73	2.1%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	39	19.4%	37	18.4%	103	51.2%	22	10.9%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	3	8.3%	7	19.4%	23	63.9%	3	8.3%	36	100.0%
Total	1,685	23.0%	902	12.3%	4,566	62.3%	177	2.4%	7,330	100.0%

3.7 What effect would increasing the level of the Council Tax Premium for second homes have on the local economy?

In total a majority of respondents (70.9%, N=5,200) thought that increasing the level of increasing the council tax premium on second homes would have a negative impact on the local economy. 16.4% (N=1,203) thought increasing the premium would have a positive impact on the local economy and 9.6% (N=703) thought it would not have an impact.

By looking at differences between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, some difference is seen in the opinion as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

The table below details the response by category, and shows that the vast majority (90.8%) of respondents who own a second home believe increasing the premium level would have a negative impact on the local economy. 5.8% believed increasing the premium would have no impact.

Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, 52.6% believed increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local economy, 30.7% believed it would have a positive impact and 12.9% believed there would be no impact.

Among those owning long-term empty properties the majority (61.7%) felt increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local economy.

Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and a second home, the majority (75.0%) believed that increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local economy.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,119	30.7%	469	12.9%	1,918	52.6%	140	3.8%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	59	1.7%	201	5.8%	3,131	90.8%	56	1.6%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	24	11.9%	29	14.4%	124	61.7%	24	11.9%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	1	2.8%	4	11.1%	27	75.0%	4	11.1%	36	100.0%
Total	1,203	16.4%	703	9.6%	5,200	70.9%	224	3.1%	7,330	100.0%

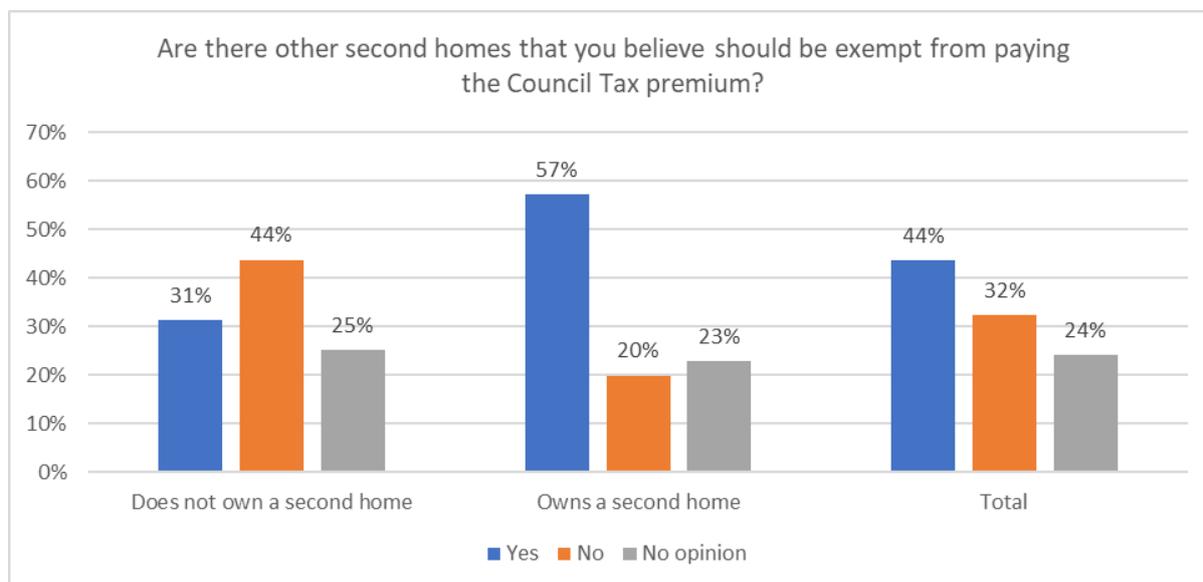
3.8 Are there other second homes that you believe should be exempt from paying the Council Tax Premium?

The following second homes are statutorily exempt from being subject to the Premium:

- Dwellings being marketed for sale – time-limited for one year
- Dwellings being marketed for let – time-limited for one year
- Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling
- Dwellings which would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in armed forces accommodation
- Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings
- Seasonal homes where year-round occupation is prohibited
- Job-related dwellings

Respondents had an opportunity to consider whether any other type of second home needed to be added to the list. 43.6% (N=3,195) of respondents rated this as necessary, with 32.4% (N=2,375) indicating no need to add to the list and 24.0% (N=1,760) not having an opinion.

As shown in the chart below second home owners were more likely than other respondents to suggest premium exemptions, with 57.2% (N=1,994) of all second home owners reporting this compared to 31.2% (N=1,201) of all other respondents.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

3.9 Note any other second homes that you believe should be exempt from paying the Council Tax Premium

Those who identified the need to add to the exemption list had a chance to detail this. Of the 3,195 who reported "Yes" 97.7% (N=3,122) detailed that in comments.

Comments	Number of comments	% of those who gave comments
Second homes let for holidays or businesses or for tourism purposes	523	16.8%
Frequently used second homes	373	11.9%
All second homes	366	11.7%
Homes inherited and now used as second homes / inherited and intend to keep / homes that have been 'in the family' for a period	268	8.6%
Second homes that have been owned for a certain period of time or purchased before a specified date	191	6.1%

Properties built as Holiday Homes or where permanent residence is prohibited	152	4.9%
Second homes of individuals with a local connection (e.g. family, have lived in Gwynedd or Wales etc) or whose main home is local	146	4.7%
Dwellings on the same site as permanent residence e.g. annex, farm buildings	108	3.5%
Undesirable location / Remote dwellings / Limited access / Limited facilities / Limited use of Council facilities	105	3.4%
Personal use only or not generating income	101	3.2%
Being renovated or awaiting planning permission	92	2.9%
A property that is not suitable for year-round living due to the size or condition of the house, or is a seasonal home, caravan, holiday cabins etc	88	2.8%
Depending on the owner's circumstances e.g. pensioners, illness, where the owner is in a care home or single person	85	2.7%
Related to a job or university - working elsewhere or living elsewhere and working in Gwynedd	76	2.4%
Properties purchased before premium	70	2.2%
Unsuitable homes for locals or first-time buyers	63	2.0%
Properties that have or to be let for long-term rent	59	1.9%
The second home will become the main residence in the future	58	1.9%
A time to consider after a bereavement and inheriting a home	55	1.8%
Charitable, socially useful or enabling charity work e.g. Ukraine, volunteering while there, carting key workers etc	53	1.7%
Holiday homes	42	1.3%
Properties for sale or will be sold	41	1.3%
A second home that has or will be built, developed or improved by the owner	25	0.8%
Second homes under a lease that prohibits letting or subletting property or restricting for personal use only	22	0.7%
Location - Homes in areas of high demand or in areas with few second homes	22	0.7%
Buildings in poor condition	18	0.6%
Second housing that benefits the economy or local (excluding tourism or other category) e.g. employing staff	17	0.5%
Listed buildings	12	0.4%
Second home which is part of another business (not related to tourism) e.g. farm	9	0.3%
High value homes	7	0.2%
Rarely used second homes	7	0.2%
Low value homes	6	0.2%
Empty property	6	0.2%
Registered to vote in their second houses	5	0.2%

Second houses at their only property in the UK	2	0.1%
Lease property	1	0.0%
Owned by an individual not a property company	1	0.0%
Where one of the two homes is rented by the individual	1	0.0%
Properties that are not empty for a long time	1	0.0%

As multiple respondents have made more than one comment the numbers add up to more than 100%

3.10 Any other comments you have about second homes

7 2.7% (N=5,329) of respondents commented further on second homes.

Comments	Number of comments	% of thoes who gave comments
Second home owners contribute to the local economy / local community. Restricting second homes would damage the economy	2731	51.2%
A higher CT premium would target people with a second home, unfairly / unreasonably	892	16.7%
Second homes are a barrier to an affordable housing market for local people / viable communities	548	10.3%
Unfair on families who have inherited a home (including local people) / Unfair on families who have invested in Gwynedd for decades / Unfair on all those who have saved for years to buy a second house	508	9.5%
Local people don't want to buy the houses / The house unsuitable for a family (condition/location) / The house had been on the market for a while before they bought it / Spent thousands renovating an unsuitable house	459	8.6%
The Council should do more to provide and promote affordable housing	426	8.0%
I / people I know would sell their second home if the premium increased	384	7.2%
A premium increase would not help make housing affordable	371	7.0%
Local people also own a second house / Punishment of local people who have invested due to tourism	235	4.4%
Creating jobs / a viable economy is the answer rather than charging a premium	216	4.1%
Need to increase CT premium on second homes as soon as possible	206	3.9%
Second homeowners with their main house outside Gwynedd / North Wales / Wales only charge a premium - no penalising Gwynedd residents	160	3.0%

Need to close any loopholes in terms of taxation (including holiday accommodation taxation)	157	2.9%
The problem of affordable housing should be dealt with in other ways, e.g. planning regulations / restrictions on purchases	156	2.9%
A premium increase would target English people / racially / against human rights	131	2.5%
Council Tax changes should only be introduced in certain areas, depending on local circumstances	122	2.3%
Not fair to pay more tax, when using fewer services than local residents	121	2.3%
Need restrictions on, and better manage the short-term holiday accommodation market	118	2.2%
The '182 day' rule for holiday accommodation to be counted as a business is unrealistic / unfair and means more will have to pay the premium	110	2.1%
An increase in premium would cause an increase in the number of holiday accommodation	98	1.8%
Not clear how the money from any increase (and/or the previous increase) would be used	77	1.4%
Increasing the premium would lead to a change in the nature of second home ownership, with only investors and wealthy people able to afford them	71	1.3%
Any premium should be limited to new purchases, not to people who had previously bought houses	57	1.1%
Increasing premium would cause a collapse in house prices locally, with significant / harmful consequences	44	0.8%
Second homes have no impact on the Welsh language (or are less harmful than if they went to non-Welsh speaking permanent residents)	27	0.5%
Second homes are a complex problem, and any action needs to be taken with care / based on detailed evidence	26	0.5%
Houses that are in the process of being repaired should be exempt / Houses that are not in condition to be sold or rented	23	0.4%
Some houses have been built specifically as second homes and/or restrictions on the amount of time there can be	19	0.4%
It wouldn't 'look good' for Gwynedd to be increasing CT premiums - unsupportive / introspective image	18	0.3%
Not a good time to make any change, due to the state of the economy	8	0.2%
Increasing the premium would only move the problem to another part of Wales	7	0.1%
Not-for-profit social enterprises that run holiday units should be excluded	1	0.0%

As multiple respondents have made more than one comment the numbers add up to more than 100%

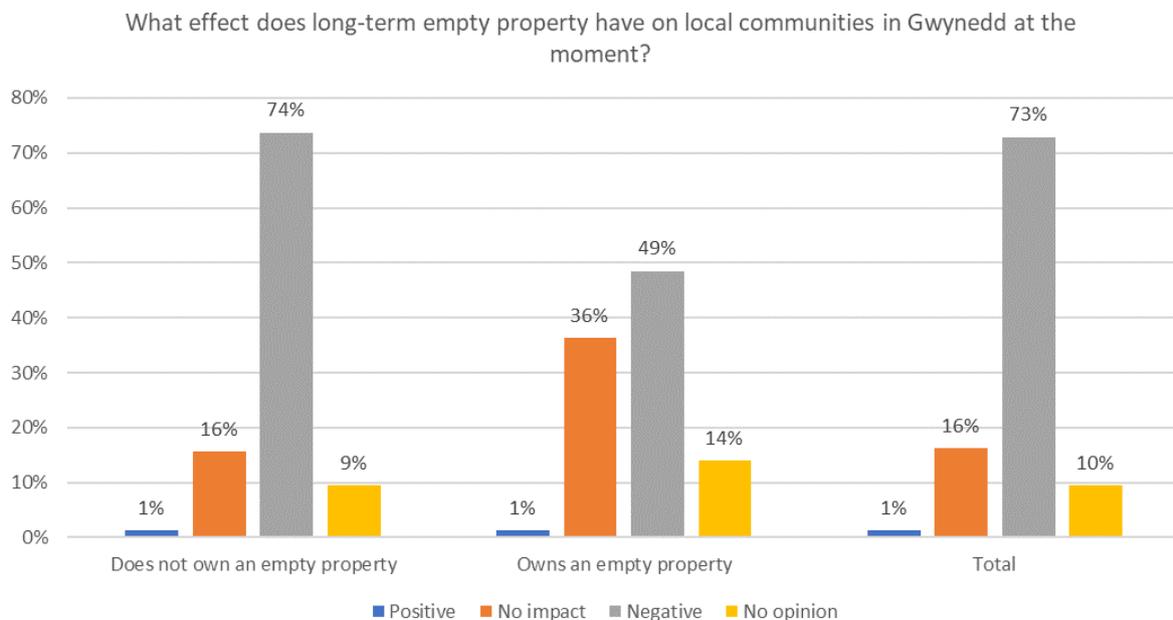
4. Results for Long-Term Empty Properties

This section looks specifically at the results of the questions regarding long-term empty properties.

4.1 What effect does long-term empty property have on local communities in Gwynedd at the moment?

In total the majority of respondents (72.9%, N=5,342) thought long-term empty properties were currently having a negative impact on local communities, while 16.2% (N=1,191) thought they were not having an impact and 1.3% (N=96) thought they had a positive impact. 9.6% (N=701) of respondents had no opinion on this.

However, by looking at differences between respondents who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, there is some difference in the opinion as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home.

The table below details the responses by category of respondents. The main clear difference is that respondents who own a long-term empty property are more likely than other respondents to think it has no impact on local communities: 37.3% of those with long-term empty properties, and 30.6% of those with long-term empty properties and a second home thought there is no impact. This compares to 13.4% of respondents who did not have a long-term empty property or a second home, and 17.9% of respondents who have a second home.

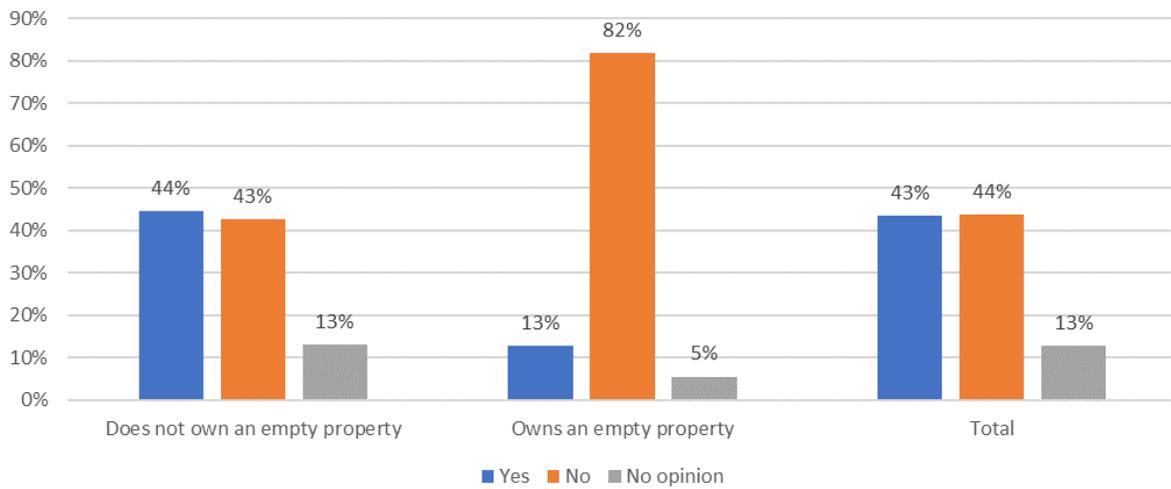
	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	45	1.2%	487	13.4%	2,886	79.2%	228	6.3%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	48	1.4%	618	17.9%	2,341	67.9%	440	12.8%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	3	1.5%	75	37.3%	95	47.3%	28	13.9%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	-	-	11	30.6%	20	55.6%	5	13.9%	36	100.0%
Total	96	1.3%	1,191	16.2%	5,342	72.9%	701	9.6%	7,330	100.0%

4.2 Currently the Council Tax Premium on long-term empty properties is 100%. The Council is considering whether to increase the level of the Council Tax Premium. Do you think this is appropriate?

Overall the views of respondents were very divided with 43.8% (N=3,210) thinking that increasing the premium on long-term empty properties would not be appropriate, and 43.4% (N=3,181) thinking it would be appropriate. 12.8% (N=939) of respondents had no opinion on this.

However, looking at differences between respondents who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, a significant difference in opinion is seen as shown in the chart below.

In your opinion is it appropriate to increase the level of the council tax premium on long-term empty properties?



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home.

The table below details the responses by category, and shows that the vast majority (84.1%) of respondents who own long-term empty properties oppose increasing the level of premium on these properties, while among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, the majority (55.8%) were in favour of increasing the premium.

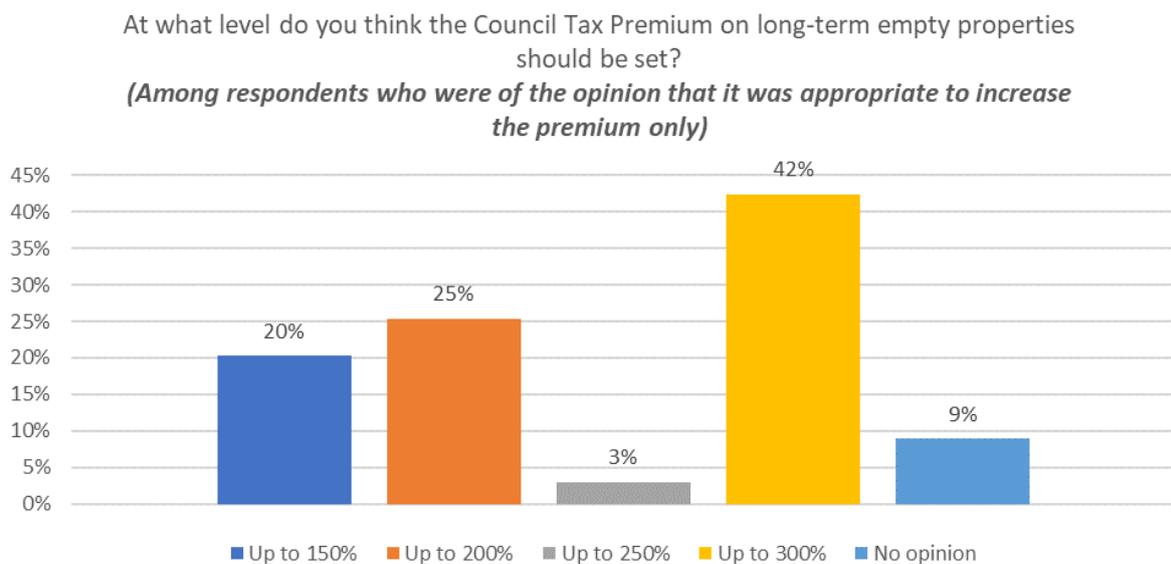
Among second home owners the response was more mixed with 48.9% opposed to increasing the premium on long-term empty properties and 32.4% in favour of increasing it. For the small number of respondents who own long-term empty and second homes, 69.4% opposed increasing the premium on long-term empty properties.

	Yes		No		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	2,035	55.8%	1,330	36.5%	281	7.7%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	1,116	32.4%	1,686	48.9%	645	18.7%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	23	11.4%	169	84.1%	9	4.5%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	7	19.4%	25	69.4%	4	11.1%	36	100.0%
Total	3,181	43.4%	3,210	43.8%	939	12.8%	7,330	100.0%

4.3 At what level do you think the Council Tax Premium on long-term empty properties should be set?

The 3,181 respondents who thought increasing the council tax premium level on long-term empty properties was appropriate, had the opportunity to then give their views on the level that should be set.

Among these respondents, 42.4% (N=1,350) believed the premium should be increased by up to 300%, with a further 25.4% (N=808) believing it should be increased by up to 200% and 20.3% (N=645) for increasing it up to 150% (chart below).



The full results by respondent category are shown in the table below but noting that since many respondents who own long-term empty properties were not in favour of increasing the premium at all, the percentages in these categories were based on small numbers.

	Up to 150%		Up to 200%		Up to 250%		Up to 300%		No opinion		Total
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	320	15.7%	462	22.7%	70	3.44%	1,083	53.2%	100	4.9%	2,035
Own a second home	317	28.4%	338	30.3%	25	2.2%	259	23.2%	177	15.9%	1,116
Own a long-term empty property	6	26.1%	8	34.8%	-	-	7	30.4%	2	8.7%	23
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	2	28.6%	-	-	-	-	1	14.3%	4	57.1%	7
Total	645	20.3%	808	25.4%	95	3.0%	1,350	42.4%	283	8.9%	3,181

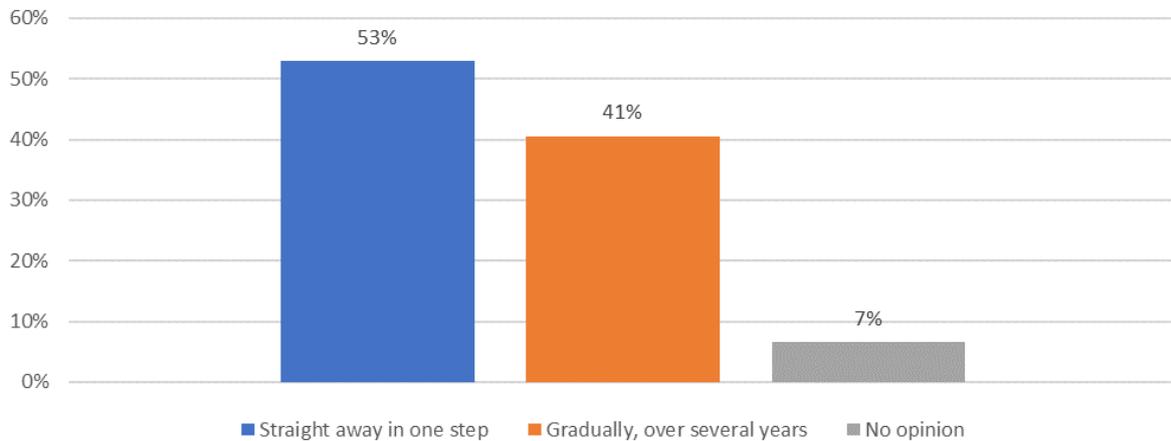
A question only relevant to the respondents who were in favour of increasing the premium on long-term empty properties

4.4 How should the Council Tax Premium on long-term empty properties be introduced?

There was also an opportunity for the 3,181 respondents who thought increasing the council tax premium level on long-term empty properties was appropriate, to give their views on how the increase should be delivered.

Among these respondents, about half (52.9%, N=1,684) believed the premium should be increased immediately in a single step, with 40.6% (N=1,290) believing it should be phased in over several years (chart below).

How should the Council Tax Premium on long-term empty properties be introduced?
 (Among respondents who were of the opinion that it was appropriate to increase the premium only)



Again, the full results by respondent category are shown below but noting again that as many respondents who own long-term empty properties were not in favour of increasing the premium at all, the percentages within these categories were based on small numbers.

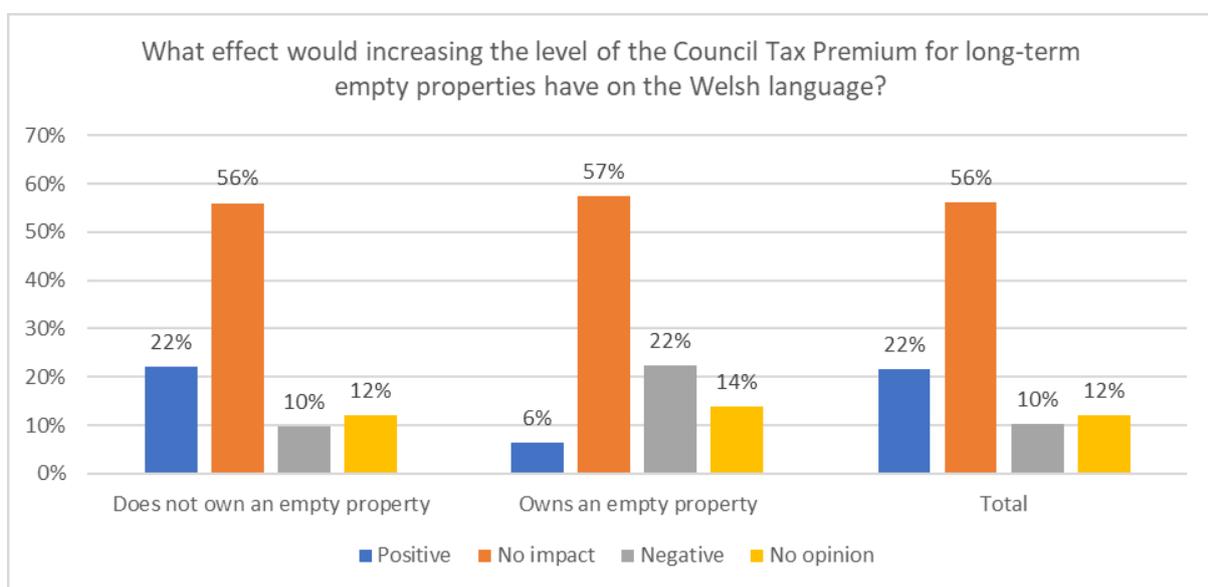
	Immediately, in one step		Gradually, over several years		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,313	64.5%	645	31.7%	77	3.8%	2,035	100.0%
Own a second home	365	32.7%	623	55.8%	128	11.5%	1,116	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	5	21.7%	17	73.9%	1	4.3%	23	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	1	14.3%	5	71.4%	1	14.2%	7	100.0%
Total	1,684	52.9%	1,290	40.6%	207	6.5%	3,181	100.0%

A question only relevant to the respondents who were in favour of increasing the premium on long-term empty properties

4.5 What effect would increasing the level of the Council Tax Premium for long-term empty properties have on the Welsh language?

In total just over half of respondents (55.1%, N=3,433) thought that increasing the level of premium on long-term empty properties would not have any effect on the Welsh language. 21.7% (N=1,588) thought there would be a positive effect and 10.2% (N=748) thought there would be a negative effect.

Looking at differences between respondents who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, it is seen (chart below) that owners of long-term empty properties are somewhat more inclined to believe that the Welsh language would be negatively impacted if the premium was increased (and less inclined to believe that there would be a positive impact).



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home.

The table below details the response by category, and shows that 58.7% of respondents who own long-term empty properties believe that increasing the level of premium would have no impact on the Welsh language, with 21.4% believing that increasing the premium would have a negative impact.

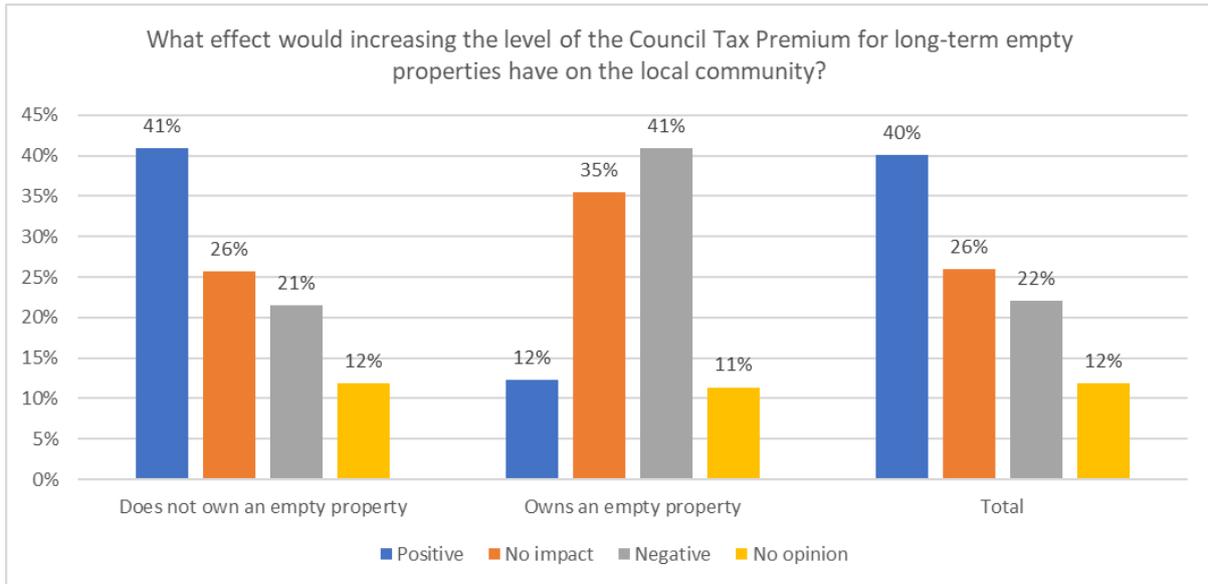
The majority of second home owners (67.3%) felt that increasing the premium on long-term empty properties would have no impact on the Welsh language. But among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, opinion was somewhat more divided with 45.3% believing it would not have an impact on the Welsh language, 36.7% believing it would have a positive impact and 9.5% believing it would have a negative impact.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,339	36.7%	1,650	45.3%	346	9.5%	311	8.5%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	234	6.8%	2,321	67.3%	349	10.1%	543	15.8%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	14	7.0%	118	58.7%	43	21.4%	26	12.9%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	1	2.8%	18	50.0%	10	27.8%	7	19.4%	36	100.0%
Total	1,588	21.7%	4,107	56.0%	748	10.2%	887	12.1%	7,330	100.0%

4.6 What effect would increasing the level of the Council Tax Premium for long-term empty properties have on the local community?

In total opinion on this question was quite divided with 40.0% (N=2,935) of respondents thinking that increasing the level of premium on long term empty property would have a positive impact on the local community, 26.0% (N=1,905) believing there would be no impact and 22.1% (N=1,619) thought there would be a negative impact. 11.9% (N=871) of respondents had no opinion on this.

However looking separately at the responses of those who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, a significant difference in opinion is seen as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home

The table below details the response by category, and shows that 42.3% of respondents who own long-term empty properties believe that increasing the level of premium would have a negative impact on the local community, with 34.8% believing it would have no impact.

Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, the majority (53.6%) believed increasing the premium would have a positive impact on the local community, 21.5% believed there would be no impact, and 17.7% believed there would be a negative impact.

Among those owning a second home, opinion was sharply divided with 30.1% believing there would be no impact, 27.6% thought there would be a positive impact and 25.4% thought there would be a negative impact.

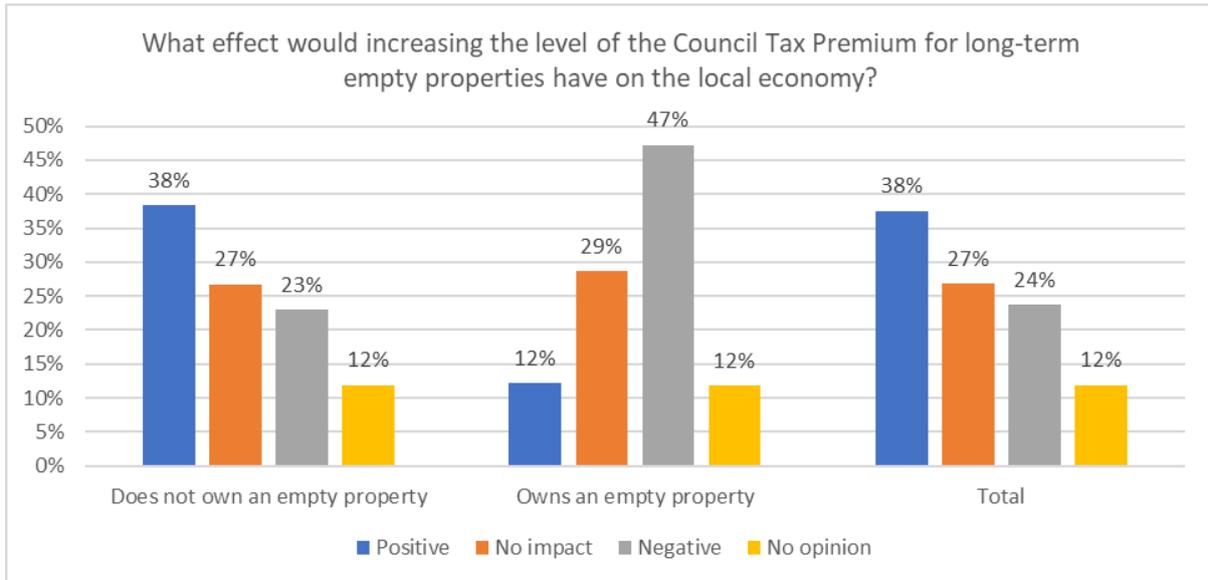
Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and a second home, 38.9% thought there would be no impact on the local community, and 33.3% thought there would be a negative impact.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,954	53.6%	783	21.5%	645	17.7%	264	7.2%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	952	27.6%	1,038	30.1%	877	25.4%	580	16.8%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	27	13.4%	70	34.8%	85	42.3%	19	9.5%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	2	5.6%	14	38.9%	12	33.3%	8	22.2%	36	100.0%
Total	2,935	40.0%	1,905	26.0%	1,619	22.1%	871	11.9%	7,330	100.0%

4.7 What effect would increasing the level of the Council Tax Premium for long-term empty properties have on the local economy?

Overall there was also considerable difference of opinion on this question with 37.5% (N=2,752) of all respondents believing that increasing the premium on long-term empty properties would have a positive impact on the local economy. 26.8% (N=1,964) thought there would be no impact, and 23.7% (N=1,740) thought there would be a negative impact. 11.9% (N=874) of respondents had no opinion on this.

However, by looking at differences between respondents who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, a significant difference in opinion is seen as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home

The table below details the response by category, and shows that 48.3% of respondents who own long-term empty properties believe increasing the premium level would have a negative impact on the local economy. 29.4% thought increasing the premium would have no effect.

Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, 49.3% believed increasing the premium would have a positive impact on the local economy, 23.4% believed it would have no impact and 19.6% believed it would have a negative impact.

Among those owning a second home, opinion was split with 30.2% feeling that increasing the premium on long-term empty properties would have no impact on the local economy, 26.8% thinking there would be a positive impact and 26.5% believing there would be a negative impact .

Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and a second home, 41.7% believed that increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local economy, while 25.0% believed it would have no impact.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,799	49.3%	854	23.4%	714	19.6%	279	7.7%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	924	26.8%	1,042	30.2%	914	26.5%	567	16.4%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	24	11.9%	59	29.4%	97	48.3%	21	10.4%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	5	13.9%	9	25.0%	15	41.7%	7	19.4%	36	100.0%
Total	2,752	37.5%	1,964	26.8%	1,740	23.7%	874	11.9%	7,330	100.0%

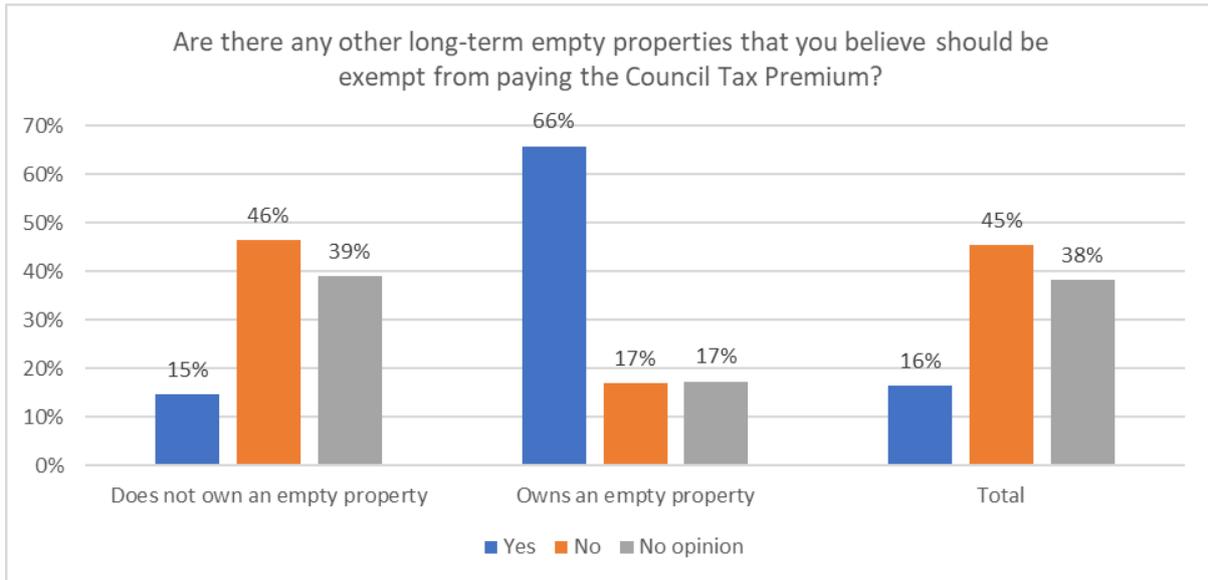
4.8 Are there other long-term empty properties that you believe should be exempt from paying the Council Tax Premium?

The following long-term empty properties are statutorily exempt from being subject to the Premium:

- Dwellings being marketed for sale – time-limited for one year
- Dwellings being marketed for let – time-limited for one year
- Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling
- Dwellings which would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in armed forces accommodation

Respondents had an opportunity to consider whether any type of other long-term empty property needed to be added to the list. 16.3% (N=1,196) of respondents rated this as necessary, with 45.4% (N=3,329) indicating no need to add to the list and 38.3% (N=2,805) not having an opinion.

As shown in the chart below respondents owning long-term empty properties were more likely than other respondents to suggest premium exemptions, with 65.8% (N=156) of all long-term empty property owners reporting this compared to 14.7% (N=1,040) of all other respondents.



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home

4.9 Note any other long-term empty properties that you believe should be exempt from paying the Council Tax Premium

Those who identified the need to add to the exemption list had a chance to detail this. Of the 1,196 who reported "Yes", 92.7% (N=1,109) detailed that in comments.

Comment	Number of comments	% of number who gave comments
Properties undergoing major renovations (difficult to get workers)	230	20.7%
Inherited/"probate" properties	188	17.0%
Empty due to having to go to care/hospital	111	10.0%
Properties that have been for sale/for rent for a long time	95	8.6%
Need to increase the exemption period to more than 12months	89	8.0%
Properties that are not fit for habitation	79	7.1%
All long-term empty properties	78	7.0%
Holiday accommodation	49	4.4%
Second homes in use	48	4.3%
Agree with list	39	3.5%

Empty properties that are part of the main home and difficult to separate for sale/rent e.g. farm properties	36	3.2%
Property has been owned by the family for generations	34	3.1%
Property awaiting planning permission/change of use / through the courts	32	2.9%
Welsh owned property/local person	30	2.7%
Properties where the owner has had to go away to work but plans to return in the future	26	2.3%
Properties with historic/listed value	26	2.3%
Empty property with business involved	16	1.4%
Properties not receiving services from the Council	15	1.4%
No more tax should be levied on any property whether empty or not	14	1.3%
Need better definition of "long term"	12	1.1%
Eto it void where the owner intends to come to live permanently in the future	12	1.1%
Empty property owned by charity/community	10	0.9%
Powers for the Council to compel someone to sell the property to them if it has been empty for a certain period	9	0.8%
Property with restrictions or deeds of covenant	9	0.8%
Empty property owned by pensioners	8	0.7%
Property where a holiday home was the original purpose	7	0.6%
Static caravans / chalet/annex	5	0.5%
Empty property because the owner is in jail	3	0.3%
Empty houses in multiple occupation (HMO)	3	0.3%
Need to look at each request individually	3	0.3%
Properties that have been empty for less than 5 years	2	0.2%
Properties where people have owned them for years e.g. 10 years	2	0.2%
Property owner with disability or long-term illness	1	0.1%
Commercial properties	1	0.1%
Need to charge premium on empty commercial buildings	1	0.1%
Don't agree with the list - annex shouldn't be excluded	1	0.1%

4.10 Please provide any other comments you have about long-term empty properties

Of the respondents, 32.9% (N=2,415) gave further comments about long term empty dwellings.

Comment	Number of comments	% of number who gave comments
With such a shortage of housing in the area needing to encourage/motivate owners of long-term empty properties to sell/rent to local people	477	19.8%
Compulsory Purchase by the Council after a certain period of property being empty - developing into homes for local people	306	12.7%
Has the Council spoken to owners of empty properties to understand why it is empty rather than raising the premium - need to decide the premium level case by case	274	11.3%
Long term empty properties can be messy and have an impact on neighbouring properties/image of the area/vandalism	260	10.8%
Long-term empty properties much more of a problem for communities than second homes	259	10.7%
Premium is a good idea but there must be exceptions e.g. when someone has to go into a care home/go through "probate"/major renovations	238	9.9%
Long-term empty properties no help to local economy	200	8.3%
The premium should force owners to do something with them	152	6.3%
Need to increase the exemption period - more than 12 months	127	5.3%
Grants for local people to develop empty properties	122	5.1%
Council's lazy way to raise money instead of looking at their spending	98	4.1%
Need a better definition of "long term" and the difference between a second home/holiday accommodation and an empty property	97	4.0%
Long-term empty properties have impact on local community and Welsh language	93	3.9%
Figures on the number of empty properties in Gwynedd would have been useful in answering the consultation	80	3.3%
This will lead to more empty properties being put on the market	78	3.2%
Now is not the time to raise council tax - the cost of living high enough already	77	3.2%
Empty properties become harder to sell/rent due to economic situation	71	2.9%
It will have a negative impact on tourism	69	2.9%
Raising the premium may have the opposite effect to what it intends to have	64	2.7%
Premium would be a barrier to investment/expenditure in the area	59	2.4%

Many of these empty properties are not going to be suitable for housing needs in the community, including young families	56	2.3%
Need to ensure that some do not take advantage of the exemptions to avoid paying extra tax	49	2.0%
Gwynedd Council needs to focus on creating more jobs in the area	46	1.9%
Long-term empty properties where there are no improvement or sale plans should pay the premium	45	1.9%
The Council should have built far more affordable homes than they have done	42	1.7%
Is there evidence that the 100% premium is invested in the communities?	41	1.7%
Need to look at planning rules - making it easier to bring empty properties back into use / regulations that only allow local people	40	1.7%
The premium should remain 100%	39	1.6%
Questionnaire biased and narrow and not unbiased	34	1.4%
Further legislations are needed to protect property for the benefit of local communities and individuals and not punish them	33	1.4%
Some empty properties have been in family ownership for centuries	31	1.3%
Premium goes against human rights /racist	31	1.3%
People should be helped to renovate ruins	29	1.2%
Need to focus on empty commercial properties first	27	1.1%
Some empty properties bought for future living	26	1.1%
Empty properties should pay less council tax and not more - receive no services	20	0.8%
The Council should help owners bring properties into use rather than penalise them: co-operation	20	0.8%
Empty properties could not be faulted for a decline in the Welsh language	17	0.7%
Premium not fair if it's not used the same throughout the country	16	0.7%
Need to make clear/sufficient notice when the changes will happen	15	0.6%
Premium should be payable by locals identically	13	0.5%
Strict rules for landlords stop them renting the houses to people	12	0.5%
Properties furnished despite being uninhabited should not be included	11	0.5%
Raising the premium would have a negative impact on the economy	10	0.4%
Council tax should be levied on caravans that are re-homes	7	0.3%
This will lead to more empty properties turning into holiday accommodation	7	0.3%
Raising the premium would not have much impact in itself on the use of empty properties	6	0.2%
Raising the premium will create more work for Council staff e.g. going after non-paying	4	0.2%

Empty properties not a huge problem in the area	4	0.2%
Offer a different premium percentage	2	0.1%
No one from outside Gwynedd should be allowed to consult on Council Tax policy	1	0.0%
Changing property names to English names should not be allowed	1	0.0%
The premium should be dependent on income testing	1	0.0%

Appendix: Equality Questions

1. Sex

Category	Number	Percentage
Woman / Female	3,162	43.1%
Man / Male	3,491	47.6%
I identify in a different way:	25	0.3%
I prefer not to say	652	8.9%
Total Responses	7,330	100.0%

2. Age

Category	Number	Percentage
15 years old or younger	1	0.0%
16 - 24 years old	106	1.4%
25 - 34 years old	428	5.8%
35 - 44 years old	772	10.5%
45 - 54 years old	1,474	20.1%
55 - 64 years old	1,806	24.6%
65 - 74 years old	1,405	19.2%
75 - 84 years old	626	8.5%
85+ years old	101	1.4%
I prefer not to say	611	8.3%
Total Responses	7,330	100.0%

3. Nationality or national identity

Category	Number	Percentage
Scottish	41	0.6%
Welsh	2,556	34.9%
Northern Irish	20	0.3%
British	2,111	28.8%
English	1,702	23.2%
Other	249	3.4%
I prefer not to say	651	8.9%
Total Responses	7,330	100.0%

4. Race

Category	Number	Percentage
Asian	15	0.2%
Mixed / several ethnic groups	50	0.7%
Black / African Caribbean	7	0.1%
White	6,319	86.2%
Gypsy / Irish Traveller	1	0.0%
Other	52	0.7%
I prefer not to say	886	12.1%
Total Responses	7,330	100.0%

5. Religion

Category	Number	Percentage
Buddhist	15	0.2%
Christian	3,744	51.1%
Hindu	3	0.0%
Jewish	9	0.1%
Muslim	8	0.1%
Sikh	2	0.0%
No religion	2,249	30.7%
Other	115	1.6%
I prefer not to say	1,185	16.2%
Total Responses	7,330	100.0%

6. Sexuality

Category	Number	Percentage
Bisexual	49	0.7%
Gay man	61	0.8%
Gay woman / lesbian	28	0.4%
Heterosexual / Straight	5,660	77.2%
Other	109	1.5%
I prefer not to say	1,377	18.8%
Did not answer	46	0.6%
Total Responses	7,330	100.0%

7. Has your gender identification changed from that assigned to you at birth?

Category	Number	Percentage
No	6,086	83.0%
Yes	89	1.2%
I prefer not to say	1,076	14.7%
Did not answer	79	1.1%
Total Responses	7,330	100.0%

8. Disability

Category	Number	Percentage
No	5,989	81.7%
Yes	366	5.0%
I prefer not to say	975	13.3%
Total Responses	7,330	100.0%

9. Welsh Language skills

Category*	Number	Percentage
Speak Welsh	2,593	35.4%
Understand spoken Welsh	2,591	35.3%
Read Welsh	2,024	27.6%
Write in Welsh	1,670	22.8%
I can't understand Welsh	1,741	23.8%
I prefer not to say	1,580	21.6%
Other	229	3.1%

*could choose more than one category

This report was prepared by

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