# Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment

## Guys Cliff, 79-81 Conway Road, Colwyn Bay

**Proposed Residential Development** 

September 2023

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#### 1. Purpose and Structure

- 1.1. Policy CTH/5 'The Welsh Language' of the Conwy Local Development Plan requires the production of a Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment to accompany applications for residential development such as that proposed.
- 1.2. Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 20 seek to protect the Welsh language from potential negative impacts and Policy CTH/5 seeks to resist development that because of size, scale or location, will significantly harm the character and linguistic balance of a community.
- 1.3. This Community and Linguistic Assessment has therefore been produced to accompany the application for residential development at Guys Cliff, Colwyn Bay and assesses if the proposal will have any unacceptable impacts on the Welsh language and if any such impacts can be mitigated and/or avoided.
- 1.4. The structure of this assessment follows the guidance provided by the Council in their Welsh Language Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (ref: LDP6, 2014) and assesses the likely impact of the development proposal against five aspects of community life: population: quality of life; the economy; infrastructure; and the social and cultural life of the community.

<u>Please Note</u>: unless otherwise specified figures and statistics quoted are derived from 2021 Census Data.

#### 2. Linguistic Context

- 2.1. The Welsh language is an intrinsic part of the social fabric and culture of Wales. Across the country (population 3,137,052) 21% of the population identify as being able to speak Welsh (up from 19% in 2011).
- 2.2. In contrast, within the Cowny County area the percentage of Welsh speakers is higher at 25.27% of the 114,741 population.

- 2.3. Geographically within the Authority the proportion of Welsh speakers varies, the proportion of speakers being greater inland from the coast and fewer Welsh speakers in the north of county.
- 2.4. There had been a steady decline in the percentage of the population who are Welsh speaking, in particular a reduction nationally of -6.2% over the census period 2001 to 2011. There has since however been a modest increase over the previous census period of +2%.
- 2.5. The ability to speak Welsh varies significantly between age groups, being most prevalent amongst those of school age, 34% of 5-15 year olds are identified as speaking Welsh nationally (44% within the Borough).
- 2.6. Those between the ages of 60-79 within the Borough are the age group where fewest people can speak Welsh, although at 18% the proportion who do is well above the national average of 13% in this age grouping.
- 2.7. The geographic and demographic linguistic picture depicted by the Census data follows understandable patterns. Welsh language learning is compulsory during schooling and it is therefore unsurprising that Welsh language skills are recorded as high in this demographic. There is a general reduction in the proportion able to speak Welsh after age 15 however, which suggests that skills obtained during compulsory learning may begin to be lost quite quickly. Compulsory Welsh language education to Key Stage 4 level was only introduced from September 1999 and the census data indicates that those aged 16 to 38, who will have received this compulsory education post its introduction in 1999, do demonstrate a relatively high proportion able to speak Welsh, in comparison to older generations who did not receive this compulsory education.
- 2.8. There is also a reduction in those with the ability to speak Welsh in the older age groups due to in-migration. The north-Wales coastline has persistently been a popular retirement destination and in-migration has contributed to diluting Welshspeaking.
- 2.9. This migration picture and the general larger concentration of population along the coastline is reflected in the census data, where the incidence of Welsh speakers increases inland. North-west Wales is a bastion of the Welsh language and Ynys Mon and Gwynedd are those Authority areas with the highest proportion of Welsh

speakers in their population, 54.3% and 62.7% respectfully, compared to 21% nationally and 25.79% within Conwy.

- 2.10. The application site is located within Colwyn electoral ward. Within the ward the percentage of the population who can speak Welsh is below the Borough average at 18%, this reflects the wider borough picture, the application site being located in a coastal area.
- 2.11. The linguistic context therefore is one of demographic and geographic disparity, both locally and nationally.
- 2.12. National legislation requires that the Welsh and English languages be treated on the basis of equality and with the relatively recent introduction of compulsory schooling to Key Stage 4 there is greater emphasis placed on learning from an early age. While the national government have taken great steps to ensure that measures are now put in place, for a significant period of time there was a lapse in emphasis on the importance of the Welsh language to culture and identity. The implications of this are evidenced in the greater proportion of the older population unable to speak Welsh in comparison to younger generations who are now receiving compulsory Welsh language education.
- 2.13. The Council, in line with national policy, have identified the Welsh language as a priority issue in preparing the Local Development Plan and seek to ensure that development supports and sustains the long-term wellbeing of the character and linguistic balance of the communities within the County.

#### 3. Methodology

- 3.1. The assessment methodology is a subjective process intended to establish the probable impacts stemming from the proposed development.
- 3.2. The assessment will be recorded in a checklist of 11 questions following that provided by the Council within their SPG. Each aspect of the assessment will be recorded with a positive, negative or neutral score reflecting the perceived impact of the development against the five sets of issues. This perceived impact will be recorded

using numerals, with numeral +1 representing a perceived positive impact, numeral -1 a perceived negative impact, and numeral 0 for a perceived neutral impact.

- 3.3. It is for the assessor to establish the weight to be attributed to each aspect of the checklist.
- 3.4. Finally, utilising the Overall Impact Assessment Index provided within the SPG a measurable summary can be made relating to the perceived impacts.
- 3.5. An Overall Base Score of between 0.1 and 1.0 denotes a positive impact; a score of 0 denotes a neutral impact; a score between -1.0 and -0.1 denotes a negative impact, with actual figures representing the relative perceived severity. The summary table automatically calculates a dimensional index, which is a mean score for each of the community life components a mean for population; a mean for quality of life; a mean for economic factors; a mean for infrastructure; and a mean for social issues. This will enable a comparison of the mean score for each of the five components, recognising the perceived greater impacts, and possible trade-offs, between one component over another.
- 3.6. The Overall Base Index Score may then be used to calculate Language Impact Scores. These scores are divided into three variations to represent the degree of importance of the language in that particular location. The use of `high', `middle' and `low' significance for language importance is a matter for the local planning authority, and is determined by where the development is intended to be located and the results of the Linguistic Profiling exercise.

#### 4. Linguistic Impact Assessment

4.1. The answers to the following questions have been devised from drawing on sources of evidence available in the public domain, but principally census data given this assessment is being made only shortly after the publication of the 2021 data and so this is considered a very reputable and accurate source.

	Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
1	Is the proposal likely to lead to a population increase or decrease that might affect the balance of English/Welsh speakers, positively or negatively?	Might the proposal lead to an absolute or proportional decline in the number of Welsh speakers?	+1	Y	Y

- 4.2. To develop new residential units could potentially lead to an increase in Welsh speakers or a decrease in Welsh speakers, the extent to which this is the case is very much dependent on the type and scale of properties built, how this reflects community need and if the units are available on the open market or not.
- 4.3. The North Wales coastline is an established retirement destination and the proportion of the population aged 65+ within the county borough at 27.8% is significantly higher than the national proportion of 21.3% (Appendix 1). In stark comparison however Colwyn ward has a significantly lower percentage of population aged 65+, then the rest of the Borough, at 21.8% (Appendix 1).
- 4.4. If the dwellings proposed were to be all small-scale, bungalow type developments available on the open-market then this would potentially invite in-comers of retirement age. There is potential that these in-comers could be non-Welsh speaking, historic in-migration would indicate as such.
- 4.5. This application however does not seek permission for small-scale detached retirement type dwellings, nor is it for serviced apartments; this application seeks permission for 22 1-bed apartments and 1 wheelchair-accessible 2-bed apartment. The form of units proposed reflects the known level of existing need within the area and these affordable dwellings will be allocated in accordance with the local authority housing register.
- 4.6. Conwy operates a Single Access Route To Housing (SARTH) service, which means applicants only have to make one application to go on the Housing Register and not one to each individual housing provider. At time of drafting SARTH identifies the following demand:

Colwyn Bay - 1 bed flat 297, 2 bed flat 140

Old Colwyn – 1 bed flat 252, 2 bed flat 131

These will be some of the same people though as people can request multiple areas.

- 4.7. There is therefore a known need for 1 and 2 bed dwellings within Colwyn Bay and Old Colwyn and the level of demand is high, albeit there may be some duplication in these figures as persons in housing need can make requests over multiple areas. Even so the demand is still well in excess of the proposed 23 units.
- 4.8. The dwellings are not to be made available to the open market. The proposal in this form does not therefore actively encourage in-migration and represents provision of affordable housing in response to the existing known need. The proposal will not therefore result in an increase in population that will result in negative impacts on the balance of Welsh speakers as a result of in-migration.
- 4.9. As has been established it is the younger demographic that demonstrates the greatest proficiency in the Welsh language (Appendix 2) and this is very much as a result of compulsory Welsh language education. Relatively recent policy to extend this to Key Stage 4 places greater emphasis on the importance of the language to culture and national identity. This proposal does not include the provision of family housing and so it cannot be said that the proposal will have a direct positive impact on increasing the extent of accommodation within the community for children of school age. However, as evidenced by the census data, there has been an increase in the proportion of young adults who can speak Welsh (likely because of the success of compulsory Welsh language education) and so provision of affordable housing for younger adults, retaining these people within the community, will have a slight positive impact in reinforcing the continued use of the Welsh language post school age.
- 4.10. It is therefore perceived that this proposal will have a slight <u>positive</u> impact on the balance of English/Welsh speakers. The provision of the properties as affordable in accordance with the Authority's list will of course be appropriately secured through obligation and it is considered this is sufficient mitigation to ensure that a negative impact is not realised.

	Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
2	Is the proposal likely to lead to either increased in- or out-migration?	How will this impact on the number of Welsh speakers? Would any	+1	Y	Y

### change be permanent or temporary?

- 4.11. As set out above the dwellings proposed are affordable units and will be allocated in accordance with the local authority housing register. The proposed dwellings are not to be made available to the general public but only to qualifying persons and will not therefore result in significant in-migration. This is largely given that a local connection is required to be placed in Band 1 or Band 2 of the Housing Register.
- 4.12. Given the demand for housing is high and that the number of persons applying for and waiting for a property is far higher than the number of properties available each year it is likely that the majority of those allocated the available properties will have a local connection and not be in-migrants.
- 4.13. In Colwyn ward the age structure of the population is younger than the county average (Appendix 4) and Household Composition Census Data (Appendix 5) reflects that there is a relatively high percentage of the population with non dependant children living at home.
- 4.14. Without sufficient supply of affordable dwellings it is likely that there may be forced out-migration due to under-supply, this is particularly evidenced by the number of non-dependent children who remain living with their parents. As has been established above, the greatest proportion of Welsh speakers are those of school age and beyond this those who have left school over the last census period. To not provide an adequate supply of affordable dwellings, particularly those capable of housing young adults could result in a negative impact on the Welsh language if this forces out migration. If out-migration takes place within this younger generation this affects the balance of the community and the degree to which new families are created and children raised. As set out above, the greatest proportion of Welsh speakers are school-aged children and thus retaining young adults (who may go on to settle and have their own family) is crucial to the continued development of the language.
- 4.15. The provision of affordable dwellings to meet existing identified need will therefore result in a *positive*, permanent impact on the Welsh language. These positive impacts can be further secured through appropriate signage to reinforce Welsh identity.

	Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
3	Is the proposal likely to lead to a changing age structure for the community area?	Would certain age groups leave or move into the area? Could traditional social networks be broken up?	+1	Y	Y

- 4.16. As identified above the census data depicts the age structure and household composition in the ward. The population is relatively young in this area, and therefore on the basis of the statistics there will be a greater proportion of Welsh learners, even if those persons don't identify as speaking Welsh within the census data. The questions relating to the Welsh language within the census are posed in such a way that it is for the individual to self-identify as belonging to a particular group and so there may well be a hidden proportion who have a competency in Welsh that would allow them to converse in simple terms, but who don't feel they have the confidence to declare themselves as being capable of 'speaking' Welsh.
- 4.17. The proposed development responds to existing accommodation needs within the area and the affordable nature of the properties will be secured in perpetuity through appropriate obligations. Given the proposal reflects existing known need, by reference to the Housing Register, the proposal will not itself have any great impact on the wider age structure of the community. Albeit the majority of the proposed properties are single bed dwellings, these are not to be made available to any one specific age group, e.g. retirees, young adults. There exists scope therefore within the development for residents to vary significantly in age and to be made up of single or two person households.
- 4.18. To provide this form of housing will not disrupt the balance of the wider community area, for example it will not directly encourage certain age groups to leave or move into the area.
- 4.19. The proposal will have a *positive* impact by retaining residents in the community and will not disrupt the community balance in a manner which would have a negative impact on the Welsh language.

	Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
4	Is the proposal likely to have an impact on the	Might the proposal impact on the health and amenity	+1	N	Υ

quality of life of local people?	of the community? Might it increase the risk of crime or violence in the community?	
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- 4.20. The application site is a vacant property last used as a residential home and is within the existing settlement boundary. The proposed residential use is not inconsistent with the adjoining land uses and through appropriate design and mitigation will not result in unacceptable impacts on the residential amenity that existing residents can reasonably expect to enjoy. Mitigation measures are necessary to manage any unacceptable impacts and can thus be appropriately secured by planning conditions.
- 4.21. The proposed development will also have a beneficial impact on the quality of life of local people by providing an improved and affordable housing offer to those who are identified as being in need. The proposed type of dwellings has been arrived at in reference to the existing Housing Register and the identified need. If housing does not meet need this risks health deprivation and thus community stability which may have an indirect effect on the Welsh language.
- 4.22. If the proposed development resulted in a deterioration of environmental quality, and particularly an unacceptable impact on the amenity of existing local residents this might drive out-migration, particularly of more affluent members of the community who are able to do so. This affects the balance of the existing community and may therefore also affect the balance of Welsh/English speaking residents.
- 4.23. Appropriate design and mitigation measures are therefore necessary to ensure that unacceptable amenity impacts are not realised. Again, the provision of affordable housing to meet existing identified needs helps in maintaining the existing balance of the community.
- 4.24. The dwellings will be built to a high environmental standard, will be secure and allow for appropriate natural surveillance. The type of dwellings, which respond to existing identified need, results in provision that will accommodate various ages and thus wont result in an imbalance, for example if residents were retirees, or all young families.
- 4.25. The proposal will therefore result in a slight <u>positive</u> impact in this regard, it will have a direct positive impact for the residents of the proposed properties and a neutral impact for the surrounding community.

	Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
5	Is the proposal likely to lead to a detrimental impact on local businesses and local jobs?	Could the proposal potentially lead to local – Welsh speaking – businesses closing down? Might the proposal create or threaten local jobs?	0	N	N

- 4.26. The application site is currently a vacant residential property, last in use as a residential home over 18 months ago. It's loss won't affect existing business or result in the loss of existing jobs. The proposal will not threaten local jobs or cause Welsh-speaking businesses to close down. The occupants of the proposed residential properties will likely support existing businesses within the community, particularly those only a short walk away.
- 4.27. There will of course be some short-term job creation in the development of the site. By providing housing to meet identified local need, it is considered that this may have some positive impact on the job prospects of some residents who, if their quality of life improves with a better living environment, may be encouraged to seek new job opportunities.
- 4.28. It is therefore perceived that there will be a *neutral* impact.

Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
6 Is the proposal likely to lead to a greater economic diversity in the community (or wider area)?	potentially lead to	0	N	Y

4.29. This application seeks residential planning permission and does not seek to provide employment or services. There is therefore limited scope to influence the economic diversity of the community. To a degree the increased availability of affordable dwellings will have some economic impact, but the dwellings proposed are not of a type that will significantly encourage in-migration given they will only be made available to those with an identified need.

- 4.30. The application site lies in an area that may be attractive to commuters or key workers and is relatively close to existing employment land, however the properties are not available on the open market and therefore unlikely to lead to in-migration of non-Welsh speakers in this regard.
- 4.31. It is therefore perceived that the proposal will have a <u>neutral</u> impact in relation to economic diversity.

	Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
7	Is the proposal likely to have an impact on local wage/salary levels and/or house prices?	Could the proposal increase/decrease salary levels due to increase competition? Might the proposal force local – Welsh speaking – people to leave the community due to house prices, or prevent them from returning?	0	Y	N

- 4.32. This proposal seeks to increase affordable housing availability and responds to an existing known need and will therefore make a contribution to addressing a shortfall. The properties, which will only be made available to those eligible persons on the local housing register, will assist in retaining existing residents within the community and maintaining the existing balance.
- 4.33. In turn, maintaining the balance will potentially lead to an increase in the proportion of Welsh speakers where the population is relatively young (Appendix 2). The initial evidence demonstrates that the introduction of Welsh-language education to Key Stage 4 appears to be having a more lasting impact, and the proportion of the population post school-age that can speak Welsh has increased slightly (Appendix 2 & 3).
- 4.34. To a degree this is self-perpetuating, the greater the number of those who can speak Welsh, the more likely it is that the language will be spoken outside the education system. Maintaining the community balance, and providing a quality housing offer,

which is contributing factor to quality of life, helps in facilitating continued learning., is therefore an integral part of increasing the proportion of dwellings. The impact on house prices and wage/salary levels is perceived as being *neutral*.

	Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
8	Is the proposal likely to have an impact on local infrastructure and service provision?	Might the proposal threaten or secure local – Welsh medium – schools and/or health care facilities? Might the proposal threaten or secure local shops/post offices/ banks/ pubs in Welsh speaking communities, forcing certain sections of the population out of the area?	0	Y	Y

- 4.35. The proposal will not directly affect the provision of services; no provision of services on site is proposed. The proposal will however provide affordable dwellings which in turn will facilitate the continued use of existing services by residents.
- 4.36. Without an appropriate housing offer to meet existing local needs this may result in out-migration and it can certainly affect quality of life for the existing residents in need who cannot obtain appropriate housing in the locality. Out-migration will dilute the community and potentially erode the Welsh language balance within. If this were to occur there would likely be an impact on service provision. This is particularly true of schooling. If young adults are forced to out-migrate, and aren't provided an opportunity to remain living in the community, then in turn they will not be raising their own families within the community. Without maintaining this balance there will not be the consistent numbers of children moving through the schooling system and this may well therefore have detrimental impacts on education provision. Likewise a changing age demographic will have healthcare implications.
- 4.37. Given the proposed dwellings will be allocated to those on the Housing Register, these persons are most likely to be existing service users; children likely already enrolled in local schools, families already engaging with healthcare provision and council services etc.

4.38. The proposed mix of properties reflects existing need for housing, delivered at an affordable cost, that will assist in maintaining wider community balance. It is therefore perceived that the proposal will contribute to maintaining community balance and will therefore have a <u>neutral</u> impact on local infrastructure and service provision.

	Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
9	Will the proposal potentially lead to social tensions, conflict or serious divisions within the Welsh speaking community?	Might the proposal have a significant uneven effect on different parts of the local community? Might it violate tradition values of certain parts of the community?	+1	N	Y

- 4.39. This proposal seeks to meet the needs of existing local residents by providing affordable housing to those who are identified as being in need and on the Housing Register. The dwellings proposed will assist in retaining existing residents in the community and maintain the community balance.
- 4.40. The proposal will not actively encourage in-migration and will therefore not create opportunity for social tensions to arise. Appropriate measures to emphasise identity such as Welsh place names, will assist in assimilation of these properties into the community and not lead to social tensions in respect of language. The type of properties means they are suitable to occupants of varying age and not a large number of persons from a single age group or social group.
- 4.41. The proposal does not seek to introduce contentious land uses, nor encourage inmigration and it is therefore perceived that the proposal will have a *positive* impact in relation to divisions within the community.

	Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
10	Will the proposal potentially lead to change in local – Welsh – traditions/culture?	Might the proposal force local members of local voluntary/ activity/ your groups out of area due to unemployment/ high house prices?	+1	Y	Y

- 4.42. The proposed development seeks to deliver an appropriate housing provision to meet local need. The age structure of the population is relatively young (Appendix 1) in the locality and the proposal seeks to deliver housing that is suited to younger single person households and couples, as well as older economically and in-active active residents and is not designed to encourage in-migration of older generations who might be seeking retirement properties.
- 4.43. To encourage in-migration would potentially disrupt the community balance and lead to a change in tradition/culture, particularly if those in-migrating came from greater distances away. This proposal therefore does not propose a form of housing that would encourage this; this proposal seeks to provide for the identified needs of existing residents.
- 4.44. Without sufficient affordable housing provision then existing members of the community, will be forced to consider out-migration and seek housing elsewhere if this is indeed available to them as an option; this will upset the community balance if this is allowed to occur.
- 4.45. It is therefore perceived that the proposal will have a <u>positive</u> impact in relation to Welsh culture and tradition. The Welsh language is an intrinsic element of the social fabric and culture of Wales and census data (Appendix 2 and 3) is initially demonstrating that compulsory Welsh language is having a positive impact.

	Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
11	Is the proposal likely to have an impact on the use of the Welsh language in the community?	Is the proposal likely to lead to less use of Welsh language in the community? Reasons for this: Welsh speakers is less of a %, language change in specific social networks, lack of Welsh services provision in light of the development ,education, child care etc. Is the proposal likely to lead to more use of the Welsh language in the community?	0	Y	Y

4.46. The proposed development itself will not have a direct impact on the use of the Welsh language in the community. The evidence (Appendix 7) demonstrates that the

proportion of the population who speak Welsh are more likely to live in property owned outright then they are to live in social rented accommodation and that of those households who don't speak they are twice as likely to be in social accommodation as non-Welsh speaking households.

- 4.47. The statistics indicate that, nationally, social rented housing is circa. 9 times more likely to be occupied by a non-Welsh speaking household whereas within the Conwy County Borough social rented housing is only 5 times more likely to be occupied by a non-Welsh speaking household.
- 4.48. The provision of affordable housing on this site is therefore likely to increase the number of non-Welsh speaking households in absolute terms, but this of course doesn't reflect the existing level of affordable housing need and the number of 'hidden households' within the census data. As referenced above the Household Composition data identifies a relatively high percentage of, particularly lone parent families, with all children non-dependent. This suggests that there are adult children who continue to live at home and may well be in affordable housing need. They form part of the single household identified within the data at Appendix 7 and may well be Welsh-speaking, particularly if they have recently completed compulsory education, yet they form hidden households in respect of the data.
- 4.49. Persons in housing need require access to good quality, affordable accommodation, and the provision of this has a beneficial impact on the quality of life of local people by providing an improved and affordable housing offer to those who are identified as being in need. Statistically the proposal may increase the number of non-Welsh speaking households, but it is unlikely to affect the absolute number of non-Welsh speakers as recorded by number within the census data. As set out above the properties will be allocated in accordance with the Housing Register and demand for properties is such that the majority of these will likely be allocated to persons with a local connection. It is therefore considered that the proposal will likely have a <u>neutral</u> impact on the use of the Welsh language in the community.

#### 5. Conclusions

5.1. The Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment has therefore established that in relation to matters of population characteristics, quality of life, economic factors,

infrastructure supply, social and culture and aspects the perceived impacts of the proposal are neutral and positive.

5.2. The above provides an assessment of the proposal and provides a response to the 18 questions posed. It has been concluded that in respect of the five key areas positive and neutral impacts will be realised and that some mitigation measures are required to achieve this. It is considered that the above, read in conjunction with the data provided in the appendices provides the decision maker with the necessary evidence to calculate the community and linguistic impacts of the proposal.

Appendix 1	2021 Census	Age Structure	National, Authority, Ward
Appendix 2	2021 Census	Ability by Age Ability by Age	National Authority
Appendix 3	2011 Census 2001 Census	Ability by Age Ability by Age	National National
Appendix 4	2021 Census	Household Size	National, Authority, Ward
Appendix 5	2021 Census	Household Composition	National, Authority, Ward
Appendix 6	2021 Census	Ability to Speak Welsh	Authority
Appendix 7	2021 Census	Ability by Household Tenure	National, Authority
Appendix 8	November 2021	Cowlyn Ward Profile	