

Community and Linguistic Impact Assessment

Land at former TA Centre, Marine Road, Prestatyn

Proposed Residential Development

May 2025

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1. Purpose and Structure

- 1.1. Policy RD5 – ‘The Welsh language and the social and cultural fabric of communities’ of the Denbighshire 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 RD5 seeks to resist development that because of size, scale or location, will significantly harm the character and linguistic balance of a community.
- 1.3. Supplementary Planning Guidance document ‘Planning and the Welsh Language (2014)’ provides guidance on the production of community and linguistic impact assessments.
- 1.4. This Community and Linguistic Assessment has therefore been produced to accompany the application for residential development on land at the former TA Centre, Prestatyn 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.
- 1.5. The structure of this assessment follows the guidance provided by the Council in their Planning and the Welsh Language Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 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.

Please Note: 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 Denbighshire the percentage of Welsh speakers is higher at 23% of the 93,055 number population.
- 2.3. Geographically within the Authority the proportion of Welsh speakers varies, the proportion of speakers being greater inland and lower 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 been a modest increase however 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.
- 2.6. Those between the ages of 50-69 within the Borough are the age group where fewest people can speak Welsh, although the proportion who do is well above the national average.
- 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 28, 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 Welsh-speaking.
- 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 21.9% within Denbighshire.
- 2.10. The application site is located within Prestatyn East electoral ward. Within the ward the percentage of the population who can speak Welsh is below the Borough average at 14%, 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 18 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 a number of evidence sources and the level of impact determined accordingly.

	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.

4.3. The North Wales coastline is an established retirement destination and the proportion of the population aged 65+ in Denbighshire at 51.4% is significantly higher than the national proportion of 21.3% (Appendix 1). In comparison however Prestatyn East ward has a lower percentage of population aged 65+, then the rest of the Borough, 27% (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. In relation to Linguistic Assessment Question 1 therefore without appropriate mitigation measures to prevent this, there is potential for a negative impact.

4.5. This application however does not seek small-scale retirement type dwellings; this application seeks a mix of family homes and apartments. These dwellings will be provided as affordable dwellings and allocated in accordance with the local authority list. The proposal in this form does not therefore actively encourage in-migration and represents varied provision reflecting a wider community mix.

4.6. There is an identified need for housing and for the delivery of affordable units and this site will see the provision of this and will not result in an increase in population

that will result in negative impacts on the balance of Welsh speakers as a result of in-migration.

- 4.7. 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. The proposal includes provision of accommodation for families; families with children who will likely be of school age and therefore in receipt of a compulsory Welsh language education. In relation to Linguistic Assessment Question 1 this proposal will therefore result in the provision of dwellings to meet local need, including family accommodation; as evidenced by the census data the younger demographic demonstrates the greatest proportion of Welsh speakers and this proposal will therefore result in a slight positive impact on the balance of Welsh speakers.
- 4.8. It is therefore perceived that this proposal will have a positive 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 & 3	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 change be permanent or temporary?	+1	Y	Y

- 4.9. As set out above the form that the proposal takes, i.e. a mix of dwellings provided as affordable units in accordance with the local authority list will not 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.
- 4.10. 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.

- 4.11. In Prestatyn East ward the age structure of the population is slightly younger than the national average, but county wise a far greater proportion of residents in Prestatyn East are in the 16-64 age bracket. Household Size (Appendix 4) and Household Composition Census Data (Appendix 5) reflects that a higher than average portion of the population in the ward are 2 person households. This might reflect the slightly older than average age of the population in the ward and this tallies with the household composition data which identifies a higher than average number of families where all residents are 66 and over.
- 4.12. The data also shows that there are a higher number of persons in the ward living in properties where the household size is 6 or 7 persons. At face value this would suggest families with a larger number of children, but when this data is read alongside the household composition data it is clear that there are a high number of households who identify as living as a single family but with 'non-dependent' children living at home. This is higher in all instances (married or civil partnership, cohabiting couple family and lone parent family). There is also a relatively high proportion of people who identify as 'other household types with dependent children'. This data depicts that within the ward, compared to across the county and nationally, a greater proportion of children, who are no longer dependent on their parents, are remaining living at home.
- 4.13. As of 1st April 2025 the number of applicants on the Housing List seeking a 1 bedroom property in Prestatyn was over 2 and a half times greater than the number of persons seeking a 2 bed property. While this only provides a snapshot in time there is a significantly greater demand from single person households or couples.
- 4.14. Without sufficient supply of affordable dwellings it is likely that there may be forced out-migration due to under-supply, this is 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 therefore to not provide an adequate supply of family dwellings, capable of accommodating school-aged children (and the creation of new families), could result in a negative impact on the Welsh language.
- 4.15. The provision of family dwellings within the development site, along with other property types and scales to meet identified need avoids forced out migration and 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?	
4	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 data identifies persons aged 16-64 being higher than the county and national average and as identified above there are a high proportion of non-dependent children living in the family home. 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 identified accommodation needs within the county and the affordable nature of the properties will be secured in perpetuity through appropriate obligations. The mix of type and scale of dwellings proposed reflects the existing identified need and wont therefore lead to any great change in age structure.
- 4.18. To provide this form of housing will not disrupt the balance of the community area, for example it will not encourage one certain age group 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?	
5	Is the proposal likely to have an impact on the health of local people?	Might the proposal impact quality of life?	+1	N	Y

4.20. The application site is previously developed land within the settlement boundary. The proposed residential use is not inconsistent with the adjoining 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 be appropriately secured by planning conditions.

4.21. The proposed development will 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 scale and mix 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. The proposed development will therefore have a positive impact by responding to an existing identified need for affordable dwellings.

Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?	
6	Is the development likely to have an impact on the amenity of the local area?	Might the proposal result in a deterioration of environment?	+1	N	Y

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.

Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?	
7	Is the development likely to lead to the threat of increased crime or violence in the community?	Might the proposal effect community cohesion and social stability?	0	N	Y

4.24. The proposed development is consistent with the surrounding land uses and would not increase risk of crime of violence. The dwellings will be built to a high environmental standard, will be secure and allow for appropriate natural surveillance. The proposed mix and scale of dwellings, which responds to identified need, results in provision that will accommodate a varied age group, family sizes and thus won't result in an imbalance, for example all retirees, or all young families.

4.25. The proposal will therefore result in a neutral impact in this regard.

Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?	
8 & 9	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 agricultural land and is not in active use. It's loss wont affect existing business or result in job losses. The proposal will not threaten local jobs or cause Welsh-speaking businesses to close down.

4.27. There will of course be some short-term job creation in the development of the site, but longer term the provision of dwellings, and the retention and creation of new families in the locality, will provide support for existing business and services. 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 considered that there will be a neutral impact.

Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
10 Is the proposal likely to lead to a greater economic diversity in the community (or wider area)?	Could the proposal potentially lead to increase in-migration of non-Welsh speakers due to greater economic diversification?	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 some commuters, in relatively close proximity to employment opportunities and transport links, 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 neutral impact in relation to economic diversity.

Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
11 Is the proposal likely to have an impact on local wage/salary levels and/or house prices? 12	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 on the local 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?
13 14 & 15 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 *neutral* impact on local infrastructure and service provision.

Question	Related Issues	Impact	Evidence	Mitigation Required?
16 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 emphasis 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 and mix of properties will likely result in a variety of occupants by age and family status 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 in-migration 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?
17 & 18 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 structure of the local population is that persons aged 16-64 is higher than average (Appendix 1), these proposed mix of properties will reflect the varying needs of persons in this age group. Those single households, or cohabiting as well the larger family groups on the housing register. These aren't properties designed to attract in-migration, for example provision of 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 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 positive 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.

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