

### **Appendix 3 – Supplementary Comments within the Responses to the Consultation**

A public consultation was launched on 11 October 2016, and was open until 7 November 2016. The questionnaire was placed on the Council website, with regular reminders from our Twitter and Facebook accounts. Paper versions were prepared for the libraries and three Siopau Gwynedd.

A total of 930 responses was received.

The result of the survey is found in this appendix, in addition a summary of the points noted in the space given to note any supplementary comments on the question.

#### **Do you see a reason why a premium should not be raised on the Council Tax of long-term empty or second homes in Gwynedd?**

	<b>Do you see a reason why a premium should not be raised on the Council Tax of long-term empty or second homes in Gwynedd</b>			
<b>Do you own a long-term empty or second home in Gwynedd</b>	No reason not to raise a premium	A premium should not be raised.	No answer	<b>Total</b>
No	362	154	3	<b>519</b>
Yes – a second home	28	343	1	<b>372</b>
Yes – a long-term empty home	4	12		<b>16</b>
Yes – both a long-term empty home and a second home	4	4	2	<b>10</b>
No answer	7	5	1	<b>13</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>930</b>

#### **Supplementary Comments**

##### **In favour of raising a Premium**

- Second homes take housing away from local people and are damaging to communities.
- If people can afford a second home, they can afford to pay an extra tax.
- Second homes are pushing house prices up.
- Why not raise a Premium in Gwynedd if neighbouring councils are all already doing so?
- Vacant properties are wasteful and need to be bought back into use.

##### **Against charging a Premium**

- It will harm the tourism industry.
- It is an attack on outsiders.
- Second home owners do not make use of the Council's services.
- Consideration should be given to specific parts of the county where there are problems, not using this for every property.
- If the property were to be put on the market it would not sell anyway.
- Local people are the owners of many of these properties, but live away from the area because of work.

**Please indicate at what level you think it would be most reasonable to set a Council Tax Premium for long-term empty or second homes in Gwynedd (up to a maximum of 100%):**

<b>Premium Level</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
0%	19
10%	3
25%	21
30%	2
50%	60
50% on long-term empty homes, 25% on second homes	1
50%, if variable levels cannot be set	1
50% to 100%	1
60%	1
Between 60 and 90%	1
75%	31
100%	251
200%	5
250%	1
500%	1
Not sure / don't know	2
Did not note	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>

**Should the Council specify different percentages (up to a maximum of 100%) based on the length of time a long-term empty property has been empty?**

- Yes – 335
- No – 573
- No answer – 22

**Authorities are encouraged to use any additional revenue generated to help meet local housing needs, in line with the policy intentions of the premiums, but there is no legal requirement to use the additional revenue to do this.**

**In view of the fact that the Council is facing substantial financial cuts, in your opinion, how should the Council use the additional income, if a Premium were introduced?**

<b>Comment on use</b>	<b>Number</b>
The extra revenue should be used to meet local housing needs	167
The extra revenue should be spent on supporting local services at a time that the Council is facing cuts	198
A combination of the above	442
No answer	123
<b>Total</b>	<b>930</b>

**No supplementary question**

**In your opinion, if a premium were charged on the Council Tax of long-term empty or second homes, what would its effect be in Gwynedd on The Welsh Language?**

Opinion on introducing Premium	Opinion on the impact of raising a premium				
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	No answer	Total
No reason not to raise a premium	268	116	15	6	405
A premium should not be raised	14	335	158	11	518
No answer	2	3		2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>930</b>

**Supplementary Comments**

**Positive Impact**

- It would assist people who are originally from the area to stay here.
- Entire villages are empty over the winter months.
- Second home owners do not make any effort to learn the language.
- Although tourism is important, not at the cost of destroying communities.
- Serving the people who need the services should be the priority for the Council.
- Local services would be more sustainable.

**Neutral**

- Raising the Premium would not have any effect on the language.
- People will use the language of their choice, whatever the level of their Council Tax.
- There is no relevance between the Premium and the language.
- There is a presumption in the questionnaire that Welsh speakers do not buy second homes.
- The language is being used as an excuse to mask prejudice.

**Negative Impact**

- There would be fewer jobs in the tourism sector; this would force Welsh speakers to move away from the area to look for work.
- Fewer holiday homes would mean more permanent influx.
- If the property were placed on the market, non-Welsh-speaking people would be able to buy them anyway.

**In your opinion, if a premium were charged on the Council Tax of long-term empty or second homes, what would its effect be in Gwynedd on the local economy and on tourism?**

	Opinion on the impact of raising a premium				
Opinion on introducing Premium	Positive	Neutral	Negative	No answer	Total
No reason not to raise a premium	159	191	45	10	405
A premium should not be raised	19	28	460	11	518
No answer	3	1	1	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>930</b>

**Supplementary Comments**

**Positive Impact**

- Visitors would be encouraged to stay in hotels, camp sites etc., contributing to local employment.
- There would be more permanent residents in villages supporting small shops etc.
- An opportunity to wean the economy away from tourism – the tourism economy is weak and dependent.
- Encourage owners to rent out property as holiday units – to encourage more visitors.

**Neutral**

- There will be no significant change in the number of second homes.
- Visitors will continue to come to Gwynedd as they are now.
- Most second-home owners don't contribute much to the economy because they bring goods with them when they come to stay, not purchasing locally.

**Negative Impact**

- This would have a negative impact on the tourism industry, and will send a message that the area does not want visitors at all.

**In your opinion, if a premium were charged on the Council Tax of long-term empty or second homes, what would its effect be in Gwynedd on the supply of private rented accommodation?**

	Opinion on the impact of raising a premium				
Opinion on introducing Premium	Increase overall	No impact	Reduce overall	No answer	Total
No reason not to raise a premium	236	130	27	12	405
A premium should not be raised	70	265	159	24	518
No answer	1	1	1	4	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>930</b>

**Supplementary Comments**

**Increase overall**

- It could encourage relevant property owners to rent the property out.

**No impact**

- There is a need to consider second homes and long term empty property differently in this context.
- Second home owners would not want to rent their properties out, or may not be able to because of mortgage restrictions etc.
- This property is not often suitable for renting out.

**Reduce overall**

- It is impossible to generalise.
- Property would be sold instead of being let.

**In your opinion, if a premium were charged on the Council Tax of long-term empty or second homes, what would its effect be on house prices in Gwynedd?**

Opinion on introducing Premium	Opinion on the impact of raising a premium				
	Increase overall	No impact	Reduce overall	No answer	Total
No reason not to raise a premium	27	149	220	9	405
A premium should not be raised	22	244	231	21	518
No answer		2	3	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>930</b>

**Supplementary Comments**

**Increase overall**

- The free market works against local residents because it is not possible for local residents to compete with individuals from outside Gwynedd with a much higher income.
- There is a high demand for properties for self-catering holidays already.

**No impact**

- The power of the market is stronger than a premium policy.
- There is a relatively small number of relevant property compared with the total Gwynedd housing market – selling these would not have an effect.
- No one can really predict what will actually happen.

**Reduce overall**

- Simple economics – increasing taxes on anything reduces demand.
- The property would be sold, thereby reducing the demand and therefore the price.

**In your opinion, if a premium were charged on the Council Tax of long-term empty or second homes, what would its effect be on the supply of affordable housing in Gwynedd?**

Opinion on introducing Premium	Opinion on the impact of raising a premium				
	More homes	No impact	Fewer homes	No answer	Total
No reason not to raise a premium	269	109	13	14	405
A premium should not be raised	34	393	63	28	518
No answer	1	4		2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>930</b>

**Sylwadau Atodol**

**More homes**

- Second homes are pushing house prices beyond what the local people can afford.
- The money could be used to build additional affordable housing.
- If Band A and Band B houses come onto the market, it may be possible to afford these.
- Encouragement for owners of second homes to sell them.

**No effect**

- There is no correlation between second homes and affordable housing.
- There are plenty of affordable housing (under £80k) for sale here already.
- No House is affordable if there are no jobs.
- Object to "affordable housing" as they create "ghettos".
- Perhaps house prices for buyers would decline, but private rent is likely to increase.
- Doubt that the extra money will go towards affordable housing.

**Fewer homes**

- Builders will not be able to afford to build new affordable housing, as they will not make money from work on second homes.
- There are a number of houses for sale already – people do not want them.
- If jobs are lost in the tourism sector, no housing will be affordable.

**We would welcome any other comments or suggestions you have.**

### **In favour of raising a Premium**

- High time that more tax is raised.
- Policing will be required, because the system is already vulnerable to abuse.
- It will discourage people from buying second homes.
- As Gwynedd has the highest percentage of second homes, we must take advantage of this.
- Support the objective, but it must be remembered that a number of houses are vacant because local people have gone to residential homes, or family have inherited property.
- Protecting native Welsh communities is not racist.

### **Against raising a Premium**

- The Council wants to kill the only thriving industry here.
- Gwynedd need the owners of second homes.
- Political bias is behind this, and it is racist. The Council's attitude is that anything Welsh is good and anything English is bad.
- The decision to raise the Premium has already been done; there is no purpose to the consultation.
- There is a need to attract more affluent people to spend their money in Gwynedd.
- Without second homes a number of cottages would be in ruins by now.
- The Council has not thought this policy through properly.