

SH 36

Ymgynghoriad ar ail gartrefi

Consultation on second homes

Ymateb gan: Cyngor Tref y Gelli

Response from: Hay Town Council

Hay Town Council's Response to Second Homes Policies Consultation with the Senedd

Responses to Dr Simon Brooks and Welsh Government's Response dated 6 July 2021

Hay Town Council has structured its responses around Dr Brooks' 12 Recommendations and also included some general comments at the bottom of this response

Recommendation 1: Develop regional and local variation in policy

Hay Town Council supports this recommendation.

Recommendation 2: Control of the numbers of second homes

Hay Town Council does not support this recommendation. Rather than reduce the number of second homes as an aim, HTC would prefer the aim to be to stabilise the number of second homes.

Recommendation 3: Definition of second homes

This recommendation refers to second homes initially, and then to holiday homes, which underlines the problem with providing an appropriate definition.

Recommendation 4: Responding to Brexit and Covid-19

Hay Town Council has no response specific to this recommendation.

Recommendation 5: The need for policy intervention across a range of policy areas

Hay Town Council does not believe that taxation policies should be utilised.

Recommendation 6: Local Council Tax Premium

Hay Town Council does not agree with this policy.

Recommendation 7: Short-term holiday accommodation and business rates

Hay Town Council believes that small businesses should be treated the same as all types of businesses.

Recommendation 8: Local Transaction Tax

Hay Town Council disagrees with this policy. Whatever the price of land is, that is what it is. It is a form of discrimination.

Recommendation 9: Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils' 'Local Market Housing' Scheme

Hay Town Council has no response specific to this recommendation.

Recommendation 10: The creation of a new use class for short-term holiday accommodation

Hay Town Council does not wish to see any additional use classes as it thinks this would be restrictive.

Recommendation 11: Trialling a new use class for second homes

Hay Town Council believes again that this policy would be restrictive and may have unforeseen consequences. For example, if a permanent dwelling was changed to second home via the planning system and a new use class, to reverse the process and turn it back into a permanent dwelling would involve going through planning again, with all the attendant costs and time. This could leave to property owners who wish to change their second home back to a permanent dwelling not doing to so, and actually create a barrier to new permanent dwellings. This suggested new policy could, therefore, exacerbate the issue that is trying to be solved.

Recommendation 12: Establish a Commission to make recommendations regarding the future of the Welsh language as a community language

Hay Town Council believes that this could be a form of discrimination that might bring unintended consequences. For example, people purchasing second homes often come from a higher-wage economy, and may well speak English. Without this influx of money, it could be that the local, Welsh-speaking indigenous populations actually lose out, rather than benefiting.

General Comments

Hay Town Council would like to add that it fundamentally sees second homes and all the attendant issues not as a problem relating to an imbalance of people, but rather an imbalance of money.

Hay Town Council would recommend the provision of Government Grants to young people to help them purchase properties within their home communities. This would enable them to remain in their communities, provide them with stability and empower them to be fully engaged members of their community whereby they would be able to give back more completely to their communities. The knock-on benefits of this to society and the local fabric of their communities would be significant. This type of approach/policy would be far more beneficial to mitigating housing issues within communities than any policies relating to taxation and/or more restrictive planning policies.