

LGPS(2)-13-06(p.3 - Annex C) - Summary of Responses to Consultation – Electoral Arrangements In Wales

REGISTERING VOTERS	
<p>Penalties for non-registration? (Q.1)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – the European system should be adopted of automatic registration.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – prefer the status quo.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - support compulsory registration and the use of penalties, but is concerned that access to the register should be restricted to electoral and police use only. Current practice of enabling the register to be used for commercial purposes should be withdrawn.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – should be voluntary.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – No.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) - Penalties are already in existence. The threat only works on a minority of electors as most know we do not take action. Do not believe it encourages people to register. Higher penalties may have more of an impact and encourage more authorities to take action against those who persistently do not register.</p> <p>Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – No.</p> <p>Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – No. The only way to encourage registration is through education of rights and responsibilities. An option to decline to vote should be included on ballot papers, ie the right not to vote.</p> <p>Roger Morris (14) - Never sought anyone’s prosecution during 23 years as a registration officer, nor did my employing authorities encourage me to do so. Multiple prosecutions would involve very significant resource costs for very little tangible benefit and any fines would probably be low. Questionable whether the application for the basic democratic <i>right</i> to vote should become publicly associated with criminal penalties. If there is no obligation <i>actually to vote</i>, what difference does failure to register make? Prosecution (or any other penalty) will probably be counter-productive, as someone fined is unlikely to be a regular or willing voter. Use of false names will surely increase. A “complete” but only partly used register is hardly an end in itself. Is this a decision for a local government official, or an individual authority, to make? Should not the local position reflect the general attitude and expectation across the</p>

U.K. as a whole? There is also considerable risk at present that a prosecution for failure to register could be turned into a campaigning or bureaucracy martyrdom platform, just as for court action about failure to pay council tax. The implications of the Robertson case in 2001 in Wakefield where an individual successfully argued that his name should not be published continue still: one can easily envisage arguments about whether a requirement to register infringed human rights. Accordingly I see little point in seeking to enforce in the present context.

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – Penalties are not the way forward – registration problems would be eliminated if it was automatic at the age of 18.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - To pursue a prosecution an Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) would need to employ additional canvassers to provide an audit trail for the delivery and collection of forms rather than relying on the postal system. An occasional use of a penalty with appropriate publicity may encourage others to register but experience shows that the public is often more concerned about being identified for financial purposes rather than having the opportunity to vote.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – European system of automatic registration should be adopted.

Mold Town Council (19) – it is not a sufficient problem to warrant use of penalties but the situation should be monitored.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – Yes.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – No. Bureaucracy required to police would outweigh any perceived benefits of increased registration. No guarantee many of these people would be interested in voting.

Ambleston Community Council (23) – compulsory voting should be considered.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – in favour of penalties. Hardly ever used because of process. ERO's don't have time or resources to pursue court cases. Needs to be a rethink of use of penalties. More people need to be fined/penalised so others take notice. Nobody pays attention to warnings on the form. Refer those who fail to register to a central body for further action? Or penalties process could be streamlined and speeded up to encourage ERO's to

pursue action against offenders.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – recommend some sort of encouragement first.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – if registration compulsory penalties should be used. May not encourage but may actively discourage failure to register.

Abergele Town Council (27) – should be used but more important to find out why people don't register, see below.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – Yes should be used as would encourage more to register.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – No.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Yes. Given it's a legal requirement why has Welsh Assembly Government not leaned heavily on local authorities to do this?

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) - Majority think in favour although appreciate would not necessarily encourage more people to register.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Yes.

Llandough Community Council (33) – Yes.

Henllys Community Council (34) – If used could only realistically be imposed on randomly selected people, and would be unfair on those penalized and unlikely to encourage more people to register. A contrary view is that stiff penalties should be imposed for failure to vote.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) - It is hard to know without a pilot. It would be hard to prove in a court of law that the registration papers were delivered without going to the expense of recorded delivery for 100% of forms – which would increase costs considerably. But one or two well-publicised convictions may significantly affect overall registration.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Yes, yes.

Penhow Community Council (37) – Penalties should NOT be used.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – No.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – Difficult to know effectiveness of penalties as they have not been implemented as the law intended. Perhaps before changing the registration method local authorities should implement the existing provisions to judge effectiveness. Could be done by targeting an area with year-on-year low registration.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – No. It would not encourage more to register as people only vote if they feel confident to do so. Apathy, lack of political education and deep mistrust of all political parties must be overcome before electorate will register freely.

Amroth Community Council (41) – No.

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Yes- doubtful

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – No

One Voice Wales (44) – Even if a fixed penalty system were devised for those refusing to register, prosecuting those who fail to pay the fixed penalty would require an increase in resources in electoral registration departments. Staff would need to be adequately trained to comply with the legal requirements necessary before successful proceedings are brought. Interviewing those who fail to register could reveal ways of improving registration.

Penally Community Council (45) – Using penalties should encourage people to register.

Nelson Community Council (46) – Penalties for non-registration should be used.

Kerry Community Council (47) - Yes

Electoral Commission (48) – The main benefit of the penalty is its deterrent value and in practice it is rarely used- most omissions or errors can be resolved by simply adding a name to the electoral register or correcting registration information. The cases which are pursued at law are those involving registration fraud.

There will always be those who fail to supply information or do so incorrectly and these will often be the more vulnerable members of society. Where intentional fraud arises, it should be prosecuted.

The Electoral Commission recommended the introduction of individual personal identifiers in electoral registration, which has not so far been accepted by the UK Government. If individual identifiers are introduced in the future, the commission will consider again the related question of sanctions.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – More importance should be given to applying penalties as these could make people more aware of the importance of voting. Wider use of the media could also help raise awareness of this issue.

City and County of Swansea (50) – At Swansea we have not prosecuted any non-

responder, mainly because past experience of other authorities using this mechanism have shown that the penalty imposed has been as little as £200 and court costs borne by the authority have cost far more.

I believe for prosecution to be effective it needs to be carried out by a body such as the Electoral Commission with maximum publicity given to the fact that they will prosecute if the form is not returned.

Simon Moffett (51) – I don't think penalties should be used.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Yes and registration form should emphasise its legality in bold red print along with the penalty for not registering.

Merthyr Cynog Community Council (55) – No, penalties should not be imposed and would not encourage more people to vote, how would it be enforced in a shifting population?

Lisvane Community Council (56) – All kinds of methods could be utilized to encourage people to register, including penalising them, but it will not necessarily ensure that they will use their vote. Generally speaking, people who are forced to do something against their will are likely to resent it. So it might be argued that such enforcement by Government would have a negative effect with people not being predisposed to using their vote.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – Penalties are not necessarily the answer. It is suggested that perhaps more attention to what, in addition to not being able to vote, e.g obtaining credit, a mobile phone or mortgage facilities, may also be lost through non-registering.

Pyle Community Council (58) – Penalties should not be used.

Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) - Registration is already compulsory and penalties should be used now.

Beaumaris Town Council (60) - ... a majority of councillors felt that a penalty should be imposed... it was felt that this would result in more people registering. There was also support for some form of automatic registration as is used in other countries.

Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Information, publicity and encouragement are more likely to be cost effective than prosecution of individuals which would be expensive and... limited in its effectiveness. Whilst reporting of such action in the press might encourage some

	<p>immediate interest and compliance, the impact on the annual canvass is unlikely to be great.... The Electoral Administration Act 2006 will make such standards (as making the canvass as comprehensive as possible and to publicise the process) uniform across the country. I believe, therefore, these provisions should now be the focus as they are more likely to produce greater compliance.</p> <p>Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – No. Bronington Community Council (65) – No. Bethesda Community Council (66) – Yes. It would encourage more people to register. Brackla Community Council (68) – Yes providing press publicity is used.</p>
<p>Methods to increase registration (Q.2 – people living with parents, those moving recently, those in rented accommodation)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – link the registration system to National Insurance number.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – Greater access to Inland Revenue/Housing/Benefits Agency/Council Tax lists to cross-match people.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - online registration might offer potential benefits for young people. Letting agencies/estate agents etc might be encouraged to issue registration information to new tenants.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – Teenage electors who are living with parents should be included on the annual canvass form normally completed by parents. For people who have recently moved (private or rented accommodation) - electoral rolling reg. forms should be dispatched with all council tax packs. Lists of movements can be sent to electoral reg. sections by council tax departments to ensure electors have re-registered. Electors should be made aware through regular information bulletins in local newspapers, TV, advertising how important it is for all to register.</p> <p>Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – as a canvasser, believe the only way is to knock on doors and explain.</p> <p>Roger Morris (14) - A simple but fairly effective way might be to require people to state their electoral number on a wide range of public documents and applications. Of course, the information would need at least random checking, and could well offend data protection and other principles were it seen to be being collected for ulterior purposes not necessary for the</p>

business in hand. It would no doubt help if local government in particular could ensure that one change of address notification was sufficient across the whole range of council services. As long as the system is seen as effectively (though not of course literally) voluntary it will remain no stronger than the available powers of persuasion.

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – Registration problems would be eliminated if it was automatic at the age of 18. The possibility of attaching a bar code that would bring up the NI number or signature or some other electronic identification would also be advisable.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - If there was a financial incentive (eg Council tax reduction) it could encourage parents to inform the local authority, but this would be complicated if moving to other areas. The onus should be on those moving out and if data protection could be overcome the use of other Council sources would assist.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – could be linked to NI number.

Mold Town Council (19) –best way to reach a majority of people is by television advertising.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – wider publicity to 16-19 year olds via suitable internet sites, TV advertising during teenage programming, leaflets issued to sixth formers in school and those registering for college courses, plus job centres, local youth service facilities, recreation centres etc, shops frequented by young people.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – perhaps private landlords could complete the registration form or at least endorse individual returns to corroborate the information returned from rented accommodation.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Pensions are automatically advised – same procedure? Poster campaigns in universities and colleges.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – use penalties as above.

Abergele Town Council (27) – young people should be automatically registered at parent's address and their vote remain there unless another permanent address provided.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – a Citizen's Register should be introduced as a lot of these people are on benefits and a register would come close to an ID card.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – see q.4.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – compulsory registration and sharing information with other agencies eg Benefits Agency.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) - Possible use of schools, registers and information being provided by landlords.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) - Surprised that there is a problem with people living with their parents. Our experience is that parents automatically include children, even if away, e.g. “gap year”, university etc, unless they are not registering themselves either. Worth considering a system for HMO occupants within each county which cross-checks the HMO register with the electoral register. Discrepancies could be followed up by a personal visit along with the registration forms to encourage registration. Most HMOs are in certain relatively circumscribed locations such as university towns, seaside towns etc – the extra costs should not be too great.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – advertise on prime-time TV.

Penhow Community Council (37) – registration application forms should be automatically included with house sale documentation, tenancy agreements and provisional driving licences.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – Property owner should be held responsible.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – link registration to issue of NI Number. Consider requiring landlords to register or notify new tenants to the Electoral Registration office.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Media advertising plus better political education and easier forms.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) - None.

One Voice Wales (44) – The parents or landlords should be under a duty to notify the electoral officer of the move.

Penally Community Council (45) – Place onus on parents/landlords to register adult children/tenants.
Hand out forms at job centres
Include forms with family tax credit, driving license, council tax etc.

Nelson Community Council (46) – Parents could make known a forwarding address for children who had recently moved out of the family home.

Kerry Community Council (47) – When address changed with Doctor's automatic notification to register.

Electoral Commission (48) – These groups are those least likely to be registered to vote and the Commission undertakes targeted promotional work in these areas. The Commission produces materials to support the work of local electoral registration officers and issues best practice guidance, which it promotes through a variety of forums. A voter participation 'toolkit' for electoral registration officers is also shortly to be made available by the commission.

An example of the commission's tailored campaign work is the information provided to home movers through the Royal Mail redirection service and advertisements in specialist home movers' press.

Ahead of the Assembly elections in 2007, the Commission will be undertaking promotional campaigns encouraging people to register to vote and providing support to electoral officers to undertake work locally.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – At the present time registering comes because of family communication and discussion. Perhaps young people could receive education on the importance of voting.

City and County of Swansea (50) – To maximise young people's obligation regarding registration, I suggest school leaver's pack could be given which would include information regarding registration and voting, Council Tax etc. A similar package could be given to every young person who signs on at the job centre for the first time.

Simon Moffett (51) – See 4.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Householder or Landlord should be responsible and penalised if not registered on the Council tax bill.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) –By the introduction of some form of landlord's declaration or pre-requisite for support services e.g- claiming benefit.

Pyle Community Council (58) – A system of automatic registration should be employed.

Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – This assumes that the young person wishes to move their vote for what might prove to be a very short period of time... They can

	<p>still cast their vote by post or proxy and if they have a long term connection with an area they may be more inclined to vote.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – The consistent provision of information about registration when individuals come into contact with a new local authority for the first time would assist. In many ways, a requirement for individual registration would be beneficial for people moving to live with their parents or into HMO's as the tendency now will probably be to wait and rely upon the annual canvass for those who are interested. Many local authorities regularly publicise registration in free newspapers delivered to all properties but hard to reach groups are less likely to read such publications.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local authority monitoring officer using social service and Education Authorities Database. • Using Council Tax Form <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – Make it compulsory for Landlords to register tenants.</p>
<p>Individual registration with personal identification: increase registration? (Q.3)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – link registration with NI number.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – No</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) – Recognises that individual registration with personal identification has potential to increase security of voting but concerned that might adversely impact on voter turnout as may be seen as an additional obstacle to voting. Provision would need to be made for voters arriving late at polling stations without personal identification in order that they might nevertheless record their vote.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – to prevent fraud personal identification should be produced before a person is able to vote.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – No.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – Not in the first instance. However, it may encourage electors to take ownership and responsibility for themselves when they find they cannot receive other benefits from not being registered. Plus it will help eradicate those instances where people are disenfranchised because the 'head of the household' does not return the electoral form.</p>

Llangedwyn Community Council (10) – agree with individual identification to help increase registration.

Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – No. People who vote do vote. Others will find a reason not to. ID cards and generally resented.

Roger Morris (14) - The passing of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 predicated answers to this question. Initially do not see why introducing personal identifiers should improve registration: those who already register are likely to continue, while those deterred by perceived greater complexity or view that registering somehow makes them more easily trackable by authority will not. On the other hand the requirement for any form of personal identification before someone can vote is likely to increase security to some degree. Question 3, however, takes *registering* and *voting* issues together, when they need to be considered separately, as very different considerations apply.

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – see answer to question 2.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - Individual registration is likely to reduce registration based on the Northern Ireland experience and make the process more complicated and costly for each ERO.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – link registration to NI number.

Mold Town Council (19) – No.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – Yes.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – Appears a massive departure from current system that will confuse regular voters and will rely on everyone attending a polling station with personal ID or being denied a vote. How would this work in the case of voters not attending a polling station but using another approved method?

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – Yes.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Yes, follow Northern Ireland example.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – No, unless penalties are applied.

Abergele Town Council (27) – Yes, should help increase registration. Some concern will lead to requirement for National Identity Card scheme. Always a danger personal identification

can be forged.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – A Citizen’s Register as above, entitling people to a host of benefits would serve as such.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – see q.4.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Yes

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) - individual registration with I.D. might deter registration.

Penarth Town Council (32) – No.

Henllys Community Council (34) - Under the proposal of individual registration with personal identification, if understood correctly, registering would no longer be compulsory. This cannot be a good thing. However, such a system would probably make voting more secure.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) - identification fraud is not a major problem at registration stage apart from possibly in HMOs. There would be major practical problems as each person would have to prove not only their identity, but also the fact that they live at the stated address. In HMOs and flats, often only one occupant takes the lead roll and pays the bills which are then in that person’s name. Therefore others cannot prove occupancy in the usual way such as a utility bill.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Yes.

Penhow Community Council (37) – producing personal ID may reduce registration, could improve security but reduce turnout.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – No.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – Yes.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – No. Voting will be more secure with ID but there must be safeguards for civil liberties.

Amroth Community Council (41) – Doubt it would make a difference

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – No

Milford Haven Town Council (43) - Yes.

One Voice Wales (44) – Individual registration with personal identification would not necessarily help to increase registration but a requirement to produce personal identification

before casting one's vote would make voting more secure.

Penally Community Council (45) – Maybe but doubtful.

Nelson Community Council (46) – Requiring personal ID would result in more genuine registrations and use of such ID at polling stations would make voting more secure.

Kerry Community Council (47) – No

Electoral Commission (48) – The Commission recommended the introduction of personal identifiers as a means of improving the comprehensiveness accuracy and security of the register and the security of voting, especially remote voting. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduces the use of personal identifiers for postal voters. If personal identifiers for all those registering to vote are introduced at some future point, their introduction will need to be accompanied by a public awareness campaign.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – This could help but would require a significant amount of campaigning by Government and Local Authority involvement.

City and County of Swansea (50) – No. Many of the people who are currently missing off the register do so to remain anonymous for many different reasons such as the threat of being found by the Department of Working Pensions (Child Support Agency) or the possibility of partners they are living with losing certain benefits.

CEWC-Cymru (52) – In line with the Electoral Commission, we feel that individual registration rather than household registration is an essential change, that should be brought in as soon as practicable. Using personal identification as an integral part of this might not increase levels of registration, but it would undoubtedly make the process more secure. That in itself would be a key step, at a time when the disillusionment with the electoral process comes from so many directions. The probity of voter registration would be one way of tackling such disillusionment.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) –Yes use pin number.

Merthyr Cynog Community Council (55) – As with several other questions, we do not think this could be enforceable.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – Possibly. It should be borne in mind however that too much emphasis on an apparent bureaucratic arrangement could be a disincentive.

Pyle Community Council (58) – No, it would probably deter more voters.

	<p>Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – No. Cyngor Tref Town Council (60) – See Q.1 Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Individual registration is unlikely to increase egistration, probably the opposite. Bronington Community Council (65) – This already happens. Brackla Community Council (68) – Yes.</p>
<p>Increase security of voting? (Q.3)</p>	<p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – No Llanor Community Council (06) – No. Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – Yes. Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – Not really. Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – The Presiding Officer has ways of cross-referencing and therefore identifying voters. Bagillt Community Council (16) - Yes it must be a deterrent to personating; however it will slow the voting process in the station and would not assist with postal voting. North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – link registration to NI number. Mold Town Council (19) – Yes, this must help. Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Yes. Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Yes. Essential to avoid fraud. Pontypool Community Council (28) – Yes. Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Yes. Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – maybe but would not prevent anyone determined to produce false I.D. Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Yes. Mumbles Community Council (38) – Yes. Amroth Community Council (41) – Doubt it would make a difference Llangunllo Community Council (42) – No Milford Haven Town Council (43) - Yes. One Voice Wales (44) – see above.</p>

	<p>Penally Community Council (45) – Yes</p> <p>Kerry Community Council (47) – No.</p> <p>Electoral Commission (48) – The Northern Ireland experience of individual registration provides a guide. The accuracy of the register improved there and, after initial falls, most recently the numbers registering have increased, whilst the annual canvass is to be discontinued.</p> <p>Ewenny Community Council (49) – If personal identification had to be produced then it should make voting more secure.</p> <p>City and County of Swansea (50) – Individual registration with a personal identification such as their national insurance number would go a long way to eliminate duplication and fraud, particularly if there was a national register and voting was carried out electronically.</p> <p>Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Yes, by pin number. The pin number should be used along with NI number. It is felt that a pin will activate a sound and secure electoral system.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – The production of personal identification for absent (postal) voting will help to make such voting more secure. Such requirements in polling stations, however, do not appear to be necessary at this stage as no significant evidence of fraud when voting personally has been detected.</p> <p>Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – Yes.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) – Yes.</p> <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – Yes and no.</p>
<p>Automatic registration (Q.4)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – yes – link to enrolling for Higher and Further Education, NI and claiming benefits – would have to register as part of the process.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – No</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - supports automatic registration and notes that national insurance records might be used to ensure that everyone was automatically registered.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – No.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – Yes.</p> <p>Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – We already have this in some form. There is</p>

an automatic registration.

Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – No. Education of rights and responsibilities is the answer.

Roger Morris (14) – Despite para 1.10 of the consultation this question is inevitably political to some degree. Automatic registration presupposes the existence of linked systems not currently operating in the U.K. In other countries where the tradition has been different it clearly works well. At a time, however, when major difficulties are being signalled with identity cards and other large-scale linked IT systems, it is difficult to see how automatic registration could be quickly and relatively inexpensively introduced. The sources of information would need to be most or all of those available to authorities now, but without the data protection and data matching problems and barriers which currently exist. A different approach is to ask why have registration at all? With automatic entitlement, why not use the reality that people nowadays often have to produce a variety of documents anyway, to prove who they are and where they live, to allow them to vote if they want to? There would of course be other problems, like foreign nationals and the inability to produce the traditional turnout percentages, but when identity cards are successfully introduced they will bring with them other alternatives for a population already largely IT-empowered for financial and other secure transactions.

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – Registration problems would be eliminated if it was automatic at the age of 18.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – yes – link to enrolling for Higher and Further Education, NI and claiming benefits – would have to register as part of the process.

Mold Town Council (19) – Not practical without the introduction of a national ID scheme.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – Yes introduce automatic registration at 18.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – Yes. ERO's should have permission to search any public database to verify household information.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Yes.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Yes.

Abergele Town Council (27) – every child should be registered at birth and number remains

with them for life, replacing need for separate NI and medical numbers. Date of birth details then automatically register for voting at appropriate age. Database would need to be maintained with up-to-date information ie home address, to work. Immigrants should also be registered in similar way and unable to work or claim benefits until they do so.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – see proposal for Citizen’s register.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – Yes, by using National Insurance numbers which are allocated to all British residents, and/or (if feasible) birth certificate numbers.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Yes.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Yes. Providing it was readily available without burdensome regulations.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Yes.

Henllys Community Council (34) - Automatic registration has to be the way forward, but, other than using birth/marriage/national insurance data no easy way of effecting this.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) - difficult where registration is constituency-based. It is currently perfectly legal to be registered at more than one address – therefore the total number of entries on all UK electoral registers could be greater than the total number of citizens. It is probably best to accept that no system will produce 100% voter registration. If we can get to 98-99%, that will be a major improvement.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Yes, but have to await introduction of identity cards.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – Yes.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – Yes.

Amroth Community Council (41) – Doubt it would make any difference

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Yes.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – No.

One Voice Wales (44) – It is difficult to envisage how automatic registration would occur without a far more stringent requirement compelling citizens to register their place of domicile with an Authority. Some may regard this as an affront to their civil liberties.

Penally Community Council (45) – Yes.

	<p>Nelson Community Council (46) – Automatic registration should be introduced.</p> <p>Kerry Community Council (47) – Yes.</p> <p>Electoral Commission (48) – Automatic registration tends to feature in countries where there is a national citizens register. The commission believes that better sharing of data would assist the registration process in Britain.</p> <p>Ewenny Community Council (49) – We do not think that it should be necessary but it could possibly help.</p> <p>City and County of Swansea (50) – As the current law states that registration is compulsory, automatic registration would be one answer in producing statistics on what reflects your town’s electorate/population.</p> <p>Simon Moffett (51) – Automatic registration seems to make more sense than penalties. It would also help to capture the young voters living with their parents and also provide a route to preventing double registration (i.e at home and away in college).</p> <p>Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Yes and kept updated.</p> <p>Merthyr Cynog Community Council (55) – Yes if this is possible, but would it be possible without the introduction of ID cards or a national register?</p> <p>Pyle Community Council (58) – Yes.</p> <p>Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – Yes.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) –There is some merit in examining other existing systems such as National Insurance. What is not known is the accuracy of their database and whether changes of address are established and recorded in a timely fashion through employers, job centres and Inland Revenue etc. If a comprehensive and mandatory ID system is established and proves effective, automatic registration could follow.</p> <p>Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – Yes.</p> <p>Bronington Community Council (65) – No.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) – Yes.</p>
<p>Sources of information to ensure automatic registration (Q.4)</p>	<p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – Use the same resources as other EU countries and improve, if necessary. Who will compile civil register or national citizens register?</p> <p>Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – Landlords and estate agents could be</p>

compelled to notify local authorities of changes.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - Need to keep link between electoral registration and local government elections due to the way existing computer systems are linked to use the information provided, which may not be possible with an automatic system, presumably run on national or regional lines.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – If such information already exists then it could be used but what guarantee is there that it is complete and accurate?

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – NI records/same as other EU countries. Conscription 'call up' seemed to work well.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – NI numbers - are held by all people of voting age.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – Through birth certificate, if a database was set up, then at age 18 the Government would automatically know someone was entitled to vote. Also through NI numbers as everyone receives one from birth.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Birth registration details, national insurance number, council tax, property registry and health records.

Penarth Town Council (32) – NI number and/or through taxation system.

Penhow Community Council (37) – No form of automatic registration could achieve better than 94% of correct addresses.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – Birth registration?

Rhyl Town Council (39) – Yes, linked to NI number. For students in further education, colleges and universities to identify student registration on courses and when allocating halls of residence.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – No.

Amroth Community Council (41) – Use of mobile phones/e-mail

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – National Insurance numbers.

Nelson Community Council (46) – This could be based on individual's National Insurance numbers.

Kerry Community Council (47) – National Insurance Number when indicate when voting age

	<p>reached and could trigger registration.</p> <p>Electoral Commission (48) – There is a new legal requirement that electoral registration officers inspect council records and the register of births and deaths, where necessary to maintain the electoral register. Unitary authorities in Wales are in a comparatively advantageous position to do this since they hold all the relevant records, such as education records. The Commission is commencing work with the Information Commissioner’s Office with a view to producing more advice on the data protection issues involved.</p> <p>City and County of Swansea (50) – I am not sure how that could be done other than via national insurance numbers.</p> <p>Solva Community Council (52) – Since registration is compulsory then why should it not be automatic, with everyone registered at age 18 via current records (birth registration, car license applications, Nat Ins record, identity card etc etc? Surely this would also reduce the chances of fraudulent registration since check would be easier via such ID.</p> <p>Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – National Insurance number or benefit agency records.</p> <p>Conwy County Borough Council (57) – This is a matter that needs to be explored/ progressed, perhaps by working in liaison with the Electoral Commission.</p> <p>Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – Identity cards.</p> <p>Brinington Community Council (65) – No.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) – The information of the Education Authorities.</p> <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – Birth, National Insurance Number, Immigration; DVLA; PAYE.</p>
<p>Methods to encourage more black and minority ethnic people to register (Q.5)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – as above, no difference to any other group.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - BME people will be best engaged in registering and voting if the candidates for an election and the elected representatives at all levels of government included greater representation from black and ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – Use forms in relevant language, even languages from countries that are ineligible to register so that they know what is going on. Education to encourage all eligible citizens to register and acknowledge that everyday activities affect</p>

everyone – registering and voting is relevant to all and necessary. Target specific BME groups nationally and locally.

Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – Education of rights and responsibilities.

Roger Morris (14) – Presupposes continuation of current system. Can only be answered in wider context of citizen participation in all aspects of public and community affairs. Language may play a part, particularly amongst older people, and where it does the Welsh Assembly will be unusually well placed to relate to experiences of people not at ease expressing themselves in English. Culture may play a somewhat different part, and be more generally influential across all age groups. Nevertheless the act of registering seems unlikely to appear of much purpose to someone who does not feel at least some identity and integration with their local community. Conversely perhaps there is no need for special steps to encourage registration of those who already identify with their community — and to do so might be stigmatised as potentially discriminatory.

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – automatic registration at age of 18 and possibility of attaching a bar code that would bring up the NI number or signature or some other electronic identification - would also apply to black and ethnic minorities.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - This issue is not one which currently affects the area of the Council or the County area within which it is situated and therefore there is little experience of the problem to enable a comment.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – as above, no difference to any other group.

Mold Town Council (19) – through education of children in schools and development of the British Citizenship scheme and its associated courses.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – More minority candidates, greater attention to their needs and issues that affect them. Direct contact with community leaders and, through them, the distribution of suitable publicity.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – More information available in other languages and distributed through places of worship and community organisations.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – education and more direct communication.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Good liaison with community leaders. Multi-ethnic posters in their community centres and meeting places.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – compulsory applies to everyone.

Abergele Town Council (27) – see q.5 above – registration should be automatic.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – felt a leading question – if registered as British Citizens then voting method used at present should apply to all.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – (1) By using sporting heroes or other well-known personalities from the black and ethnic minority communities to encourage registration. (2) A more concentrated effort to explain more clearly to members of those communities how the voting system worked and the fact that they are entitled to vote. (3) Encourage more black and ethnic minority candidates to stand for election.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Groups should be better targeted through the media and own languages, more use of community centres, religious centres, banks, post offices, supermarkets, schools and doctors surgeries. Also use of the new ‘Naturalisation process.’

Penarth Town Council (32) – Communication with race relations organisations and church leaders, and the encouragement of gendering issues.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) - Less of a problem in Wales than many areas of urban England. Working a plot-line about electoral registration into one of the big TV soaps around September/October may produce a big impact. An advertising feature in specialist papers read by minority communities could also be considered.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – A task for electoral candidates. What about BME candidates?

Rhyl Town Council (39) – More contact with local councillors. More liaison between Electoral Registration Officers and community leaders.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Encourage minority leaders to hold meetings and then take note of what they say.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) - None.

One Voice Wales (44) – Other than producing materials in the language of their choice, Black

and Ethnic Minority people could benefit from the same publicity materials as the rest of the population i.e - a simple explanation of the electoral system, the reasons for and benefits of registration etc, consequences of not registering.

Penally Community Council (45) – No one group should be treated any different from another. We are all British.

Nelson Community Council (46) – Automatic registration would resolve this to an extent.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Via National Insurance.

Electoral Commission (48) – The Commission believes targeted work can be very valuable and the information given in relation to Question 2 applies equally here. In addition, the Commission trialled activities involving street teams to promote registration particularly among black and ethnic minority people in Birmingham ahead of local government elections there in 2006. Building on this experience, the Commission is considering the feasibility of undertaking more work of this type in other areas.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – Education should be broadened for Black and Ethnic Minority groups to encourage them to understand and debate political policies.

City and County of Swansea (50) – There has to be positive engagement with not just the leaders of these communities but the people themselves. We must be seen to be open and fair, encourage members of these communities to participate in working on elections as poll clerks and counters, carry out road shows in the communities enabling people to register and ask questions about the election process. However I believe the Political Parties have a role to play here in encouraging more members from these Communities and hence more candidates from Black and ethnic backgrounds which will in turn give the people faith in the voting system.

Simon Moffett (51) – Greater attention to explaining the voting system in the education system (see 11).

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Registration should be compulsory for all.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – Doing so when dealing with these groups on other issues e.g- benefit and housing applications. Use of advice centres e.g- Citizens Advice Bureaux for this purpose.

	<p>Pyle Community Council (58) – More candidates with an ethnic background.</p> <p>Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – Shouldn't we be looking at encouraging more people of all groups to register? Why should a separate system, based upon race, even be considered?</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Further targeting of such groups by the Electoral Commission and local authorities.</p> <p>Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – Automatic registration can be used. Or possibly an incentive like reduction in council tax.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the process of registering easier e.g- Post Office Local Authority Office or the Library. • More Ethnic candidates. <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – Hold forums with ethnic community leaders; AM's MP'S and local Councillors. Must register to be able to claim any benefits.</p>
<p>WAYS OF VOTING</p>	
<p>All Postal vote – workable in Wales? (Q.6)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – Security has been and will be a problem especially for properties in multiple occupation.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – No, as they would be disregarded.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - does not support an all postal vote in Wales and sees attendance at polling stations as an important community activity.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – if we had a decent postal service...</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – keep things as they are.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) –Yes. However, would the electorate have faith in service with all the bad publicity of late? Some electors would probably be against due to bad publicity and lack of faith in the postal service. Electors would not be tied to one day and certain hours for voting. There would be no difficulty with access of polling stations for disabled, hard of hearing, sight, etc. The elector could conduct their vote in secret at home. Observers could be invited to the opening of postal votes to allow them to view the security arrangements conducted at this function.</p>

Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) –No. Cost and possible abuse of this system. Problems with it in the past.

Llangedwyn Community Council (10) – disagree with all postal voting - it opens the system up to abuse.

Hope Community Council (11) – support the principle on the grounds of convenience and cost.

Magor with Undy Community Council (12) – concern expressed – agreed postal voting should only be used for people who genuinely cannot vote, as there could be possible abuse.

Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – No. Postal votes get lost, ballot papers get left in kitchen drawers. The duty of voters should be to attend polling.

Roger Morris (14) - No doubt that an all-postal vote would be *workable* in Wales (ref to evidence to LGPS Committee on 20th April 2005 based on experience as Regional Returning Officer for all-postal pilot in the East Midlands region for the June 2004 European Parliamentary elections.) The question whether it would be the best option overall at the present time is rather different. No system is without disadvantages of some kind; the pilots as operated in some regions in 2004 were not identical to all other all-postal voting trials in local elections, and — particularly now in the wake of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 — it is the detail that can make all the difference. A comparison of the operating rules for the different trials would be necessary, so that a more informed and specific recommendation could be made. Arguments against moving to all-postal at the present time include the degree of loss of public confidence in postal voting during the last two or three years; that the reforms of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 need time to be assimilated anyway; that it would be unwise to change (and probably thereby give Wales a voting regime different from that of the rest of the U.K.) when electronic means at polling stations or elsewhere have yet to be thoroughly explored as an alternative, and one which avoids all the ballot papers being out of the returning officer's control in the post with all the inherent risks that involves; and that it loses the traditional participative element and sense of event which going to the polling station involves. (It would be interesting to know the percentages who vote by post for company AGMs, National Trust elections and the like where large numbers are involved but there is

relatively little need for the same security considerations.)

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – concern that all postal vote and use of internet/text would be open to abuse.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - Wales unfortunately has had little opportunity to test this system. The one piece mailer and advent of printers has reduced the burden on the Returning Officer (RO) and his staff, but need to overcome voter and political party suspicions about the soundness of the process if polling stations are to be dispensed with. Also places a great deal of responsibility on Royal Mail - needs to be confidence that it could cope. Should be a significant Welsh pilot undertaken before a decision is taken.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – Security has been and will be a problem especially for properties in multiple occupation.

Mold Town Council (19) –the current system is the most appropriate. It offers the electorate choice. An all postal vote might lead to a reduction in turnout with many less inclined to complete forms.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – No, concerned about abuse of postal system.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – Mechanisms still more complicated and confusing for many than voting in person where professional help is at hand. Recent elections indicate around 30% of postal votes requested are never returned. No clear indication that sending a postal vote to everyone would dramatically increase response. Large scale postal voting would be open to abuse.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – all postal vote would not be workable.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – in theory could work but the current system needs reviewing so it is easy to complete the paperwork whilst eliminating fraud.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – No, open to fraud.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – No, as subject to fraud. Tighten the restrictions and go back to the old system where postal voting restricted to sick and disabled (verified by doctor or nurse's signature) or persons absent on business (possibly holidaymakers could also be allowed postal votes if full details of holiday supplied. Otherwise they can appoint proxy voters on their behalf).

Abergele Town Council (27) – No, open to abuse and fraud.
Pontypool Community Council (28) – definitely no.
Llanelli Town Council (29) – No, as many who currently use the system lose or forget to return their forms; a sizeable number would simply ignore them; and the vagaries of the postal service do not guarantee the return of the postal votes to the Returning Officer by the deadline. There is a place for postal votes, but not an all-postal vote system.
Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – No. Too much scope for corruption.
Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – this method is open to fraud, may lead to missed deadlines and lost documentation. But could benefit rural communities.
Penarth Town Council (32) – No.
Llandough Community Council (33) – Postal voting needs to be made more secure for it to become a trusted method. If achieved could be considered as an alternative voting method.
Henllys Community Council (34) - would be open to same difficulties as already experienced in pilots in England, and to fraud. Also would be un-traditional, too cumbersome and probably less effective.
Ceredigion Green Party (35) - No. Problems to consider:

- a) Given the (un)reliability of the postal service, a percentage of people would not receive their voting forms and of those who did, a similar percentage would get lost in the post on return to the counting centre.
- b) The potential for electoral fraud much greater. There is a wide variety of potential frauds available, as was seen in recent pilot studies of all-postal voting.
- c) The possibility of duress being exerted on some members of a family to vote in particular ways, particularly within some immigrant families.

Unless the election timetable was extended, all-postal voting would shorten the time available for candidates to canvass the electorate and generally publicise their message into an impossibly short time schedule. The end result would be that only centrally funding, UK-wide publicity would count at the expense of local campaigning.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Definitely not. The costs! See information appendix to reply (article in the Times re cost of checks to deter fraud and the relative position of the ward concerned on the Welsh index of multiple deprivation).

Penhow Community Council (37) – No – security and confidentiality could be compromised. Postal voting is already available for those who need it.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – No – open to abuse.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – Any system is workable if sufficient commitment and resources, however amount of resources needed likely to outweigh benefits achieved and would not guarantee voter participation. Given past experience elsewhere in UK, more appropriate security measures would need to be identified to give confidence in system. Areas with a high density of HMO's and high level of occupancy turnover would be particularly at risk of fraud due to nature of buildings.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – In principle yes, but open to fraud.

Amroth Community Council (41) – No-too costly and the electorate will not be bothered to return their reply

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Doubtful but what about security? A postal vote will not cure apathy

Milford Haven Town Council (43) - No. Reasons Fraud.

One Voice Wales (44) – An all-postal vote would pre-suppose that the postal service was fit for that purpose. At one time voting at a polling station on election-day was a social event but today people prefer other forms of social interaction. All- postal voting would further erode this tradition.

Penally Community Council (45) – Maybe but doubtful
Open to fraud as has happened in England.

Nelson Community Council (46) – No postal voting systems are vulnerable to abuse.

Kerry Community Council (47) – No, liable to fraud.

Electoral Commission (48) – The Commission does not recommend the roll-out of all-postal ballots anywhere in the UK, for the reasons explained in detail in previously published reports. The security and administration of postal voting should improve following the implementation

of measures contained in the Electoral Administration Act 2006. However, even if postal voting becomes highly secure, convenient and efficient, our research consistently shows that, while voters value convenience and ease of voting method, they also value choice. The Commission believes that choice of voting method by traditional attendance at the polling station or by a 'remote' vote, should continue to be offered.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – There was not overall support for this because:

- i. Experience of the recent past has shown that the process is insecure.
- ii. Although postal voting may increase the percentage of people voting this possible advantage could be lost by the inefficiency of the voting system, lack of security and the process being open to fraudulent activity.

City and County of Swansea (50) – I believe that an all postal vote would work in Wales, provided that the electorate had faith in the system. Recent publicity on fraudulent postal votes has made many of the electorate question the integrity of the postal vote, at least at the moment people have a choice. If you took that choice away from them and they didn't have confidence in the only option open to them then many will not vote. The introduction of scanned in signatures on postal voting (to be used as a checking system on returned postal votes) will go a long way to re-establish some of that confidence.

Research carried out over the last few years proves that people prefer to vote at home, where they have time to study candidate's literature before placing their cross, as opposed to feeling pressurised at the polling station to place their vote and leave. People leading busy lives are less inclined to stop off at their polling station to place their vote.

From an administration point of view we would require a substantial number of staff to carry out the issuing of the postal votes and the checking of returned postal votes. More resources are required up front to eliminate the practical problems associated with polling stations.

Simon Moffett (51) – In principle I am against postal voting because of the lack of control. It makes it too easy for someone to stand over a voter and ensure they vote in a particular way. The polling station ensures that an individual is not interfered with while they are voting. I accept that some individuals may not be able to vote on election day in a polling station and I would want to see a postal voting process which is restricted to bona fide absentees rather

than anyone who chooses to vote by post.

Solva Community Council (52) – All postal voting would be seen as insecure and open to abuse.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – No. It could be open to abuse and maladministration.

Merthyr Cynog Community Council (55) – A postal vote would not be workable in Wales because of fear of misuse.

Lisvane Community Council (56) – Postal voting was introduced primarily for residents who were physically unable to attend a polling station... It is right that this form of voting is retained but the methodology for completing postal ballots should be simplified.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – With adequate preparations and public notifications there is no reason why an all postal vote could not work in Wales. In fact it has been advocated by some local authorities already.

It is believed that the public would support such an arrangement but it would need to commence well in advance of the day fixed for the poll.

Pyle Community Council (58) – No. Would be administratively chaotic.

Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – Whilst in theory it could work, there is considerable resistance to postal voting from quite large numbers of the electorate. Many quite like the act of casting their vote at a postal station and it is difficult to see why they should not be allowed to continue. Also open to abuse.

Beaumaris Town Council (60) – Councillors were unanimous in the view that the present system should be retained at polling stations with an option of postal voting where necessary.

Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – All postal voting on a regular basis was tried at the last European Parliamentary Elections. Serious difficulties were encountered with the integrity of the process and the administrative arrangements.

Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – Certainly worth trying (must be made secure).

Bronington Community Council (65) – No. (Concerns were expressed over security).

Bethesda Community Council (66) –

- No some people are proud of the tradition of voting at a station.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. There are doubts over the authenticity of voting through the post. <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – (The Council has provided varying opinions on this)-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, far too open for corruption • I don't see why not. I have used the postal system successfully for past no. of years.
<p>Forms of electronic voting (benefits and problems) (Q.7)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – Should be encouraged using an individual personal code number. It could be cheaper than staffing polling stations.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – All, might encourage the younger voter. Possible problems with IT could discourage some.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - internet and text voting could be used at polling stations and might appeal to younger voters, however concerned that a number of more elderly voters might feel disenfranchised - it might be necessary to operate any new electronic system in tandem with the current paper system for a period.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – should be used, possibly using a computer terminal, but it needs to be simple and people available to provide an explanation. Benefit of counting being easier and less liable to human error.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – stations.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – Internet, electronic at polling stations, early voting at public places (shops, libraries, etc), week before election day and personal visits at residential homes. Text voting could also work provided that security concerns could be overcome.</p> <p>Benefit – increase in turnout if you provide convenient ways to vote. Internet for those who were too busy/lazy/unable to visit polling stations, electronic at polling stations or for week before elections in public places, the RO could identify those who have voted early, if conducted electronically. Postal voting could remain for electors who did not have access to internet. Security number and registration number for each elector needs to be sent in a separate mail drop. The count would be much easier and quicker to conduct and the results are likely to be more accurate. Problems - Electors need faith in which ever system(s) used – Facility to go to count and view procedure – there may be too many electors wanting this facility.</p>

Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – Some people do not have this access, such as older people.

Llangedwyn Community Council (10) – do not support electronic voting at the present time, as it would complicate the process at polling stations.

Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – None. A plain cross X next to a candidate is the simplest, least confusing method of democracy. Some things are best left manual (without technology). There is nothing wrong with a pencil in a booth.

Roger Morris (14) - Neither the systems or the public are yet quite ready to rely entirely on internet or text voting, though these undoubtedly appeal to younger voters and need further trialling. Electronic voting at polling stations (combined with alternatives for those who cannot attend) is already available and can be made as or more secure than traditional methods. Also saves on manual counting costs, and would probably involve less difficulty in educating voters about the change since the majority would still go to a polling station as at present. (It will be noted, however, that where all-postal voting has become the norm, as in the North East in recent years, voter attitudes to the former system and its reliance on polling stations can quite quickly change.)

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – concern that use of internet/text would be open to abuse.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - If electronic voting was permitted a decision would need to be made if it was to be in addition to present polling station and postal or instead. If instead there would need to be electronic voting in polling stations as not everyone has their own PC. Due to the capital cost there would be a tendency to reduce the number of polling stations thereby likely reducing voter turnout. There is also the issue of voting security to be overcome when using a PC and even more so if texting were to be permitted, to prevent issues such as voting twice. Electronic voting in stations would ease the subsequent count burden for the RO.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – Should be encouraged using an individual personal code number. It could be cheaper than staffing polling stations.

Mold Town Council (19) – Existing system is simple and effective and should not be changed. Electronic voting may cause confusion and put many people off. Introducing

electronic voting would also be expensive.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – would not support internet or text etc, as this could be abused, unless expensive security measures were introduced. However electronic voting at polling stations would be supported, if there was adequate security.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – Difficult to have faith in such methods as impossible for election observers to have an overview of everything going on during process. Security of these suggested methods is paramount.

Ambleston Community Council (23) – internet voting should be available providing it can be made secure against fraud.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – agree with using modern technology. Anything which makes process more accessible and convenient for voters warrants investigation. Benefits will eliminate traditional procedures making elections cheaper and possibly quicker to run. Downside is validating individual electronic votes so systems must be robust.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Computer polling stations. Quick, with immediate results but prone to human error. Old and new methods working together?

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Electronic voting by computer in polling station would be acceptable. No to texting or e-mail as this would be too open to fraud or misuse.

Abergele Town Council (27) – None, would be open to abuse/fraud if unsupervised.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – Obviously some contentious issues around postal voting and if people were on holiday or too ill to vote then it would be acceptable, however as already provided in several places it is open to fraud and corruption and not a secure system. An example also given of 4 days after an election had taken place a boxful of postal votes was found. Concern was expressed about identity fraud with all personal information in one box, this was totally unacceptable.

Llanelli Town Council (29) - obviously a huge cost element in introducing electronic voting equipment, also a big question mark over the use that would be made of them if introduced at polling stations. A large proportion of the middle-aged and older generations are not computer literate and would have no interest in using them at all. On the other hand, the younger

generation who are computer literate, might continue not to bother to attend polling stations in any event. Therefore, begs the question why introducing such equipment should be considered at all, as those who are prepared to make the effort to attend polling stations can vote in the traditional way by placing a cross on the ballot paper.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Try pilot schemes in two constituencies using various forms. If successful could be rolled out across Wales.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Internet facility could be made available at polling stations, supermarkets etc. although might be baffling for senior citizens. Texts would be too open to fraud and may be difficult to make secure. Benefit could be to enlarge print on a monitor screen for visually impaired. Audible instructions may also help users understand the voting process, together with touch screens.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Council believes in the need to demonstrate the right to vote in person.

Llandough Community Council (33) - unconvinced that an electronic voting system is yet available that would allow all electors one vote and one vote alone.

Henllys Community Council (34) - favour a computer terminal at the polling station.

Provided system is secure and accurate would make voting less labour intensive and produce more rapid results. Internet voting could be tried on an experimental basis but would clearly not embrace everyone.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – Likely to be more lost than gained by switching to electronic voting. The two scenarios have different problems associated with them.

Electronic voting merely substitutes a computer for paper ballot forms, the only likely gain being a quicker and cheaper count. But many people are not used to using computers. Likely that voters would be confused and not express their preference in the way they would like compared to traditional paper ballots. Internet voting would discriminate against those without a PC at home – generally the poorer and less well educated in society. Voting by mobile phone texting would discriminate against the elderly, as texting is predominantly a young person's activity. Also unhappy with the idea that because young people are not voting in elections but are used to voting for reality TV shows, we should change the method of voting

to include texting. Equating the two activities in many peoples' minds would trivialise what should be an important civic duty of adults living in a democracy. Voting is not something to be dashed off in a few seconds of texting – it is a serious matter which merits considered thought, discussion, reading of electoral material etc. At least if you have to go down to your local polling station, you may well have given the matter rather more thought than registering a vote in a reality TV show! Voting away from polling stations also reduces the ability of political parties to utilise tellers to visit non-voters to remind them - leading to a further reduction in the percentage voting.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Not at present. Too open to abuse.

Penhow Community Council (37) – sounds like best future method but too many problems at present. As yet no secure method for text or internet voting – could one be developed? Electronic voting at polling stations would probably be too slow – hundreds of people trying to use the system at the same time. Strange as it sounds manual counting probably still the fastest system.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – None.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – electronic voting might be beneficial for the younger, more computer literate but not older voters. More beneficial might be increasing number of polling places eg supermarkets, post offices. Mobile polling stations could visit larger employers. These alternative polling stations could be electronically linked to avoid persons from voting at two locations and remove the need for a person to physically vote within their ward.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – all listed methods could be used but practicalities could prevent it (easy means of fraud). Evidence of trials has shown no increase in vote turnout. This is without considering problems of reliable connections, proper audit trails for each vote and ensuring a secure system to prevent rigged results. E voting has been put on ice due to security concerns and must be shown to be completely tamper-proof.

Amroth Community Council (41) – Mobile phone/ e- mail/ non acceptance of reply due to connection problems

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Cost.

One Voice Wales (44) – Until such time as all the population have ready access to adequate

internet services it would seem unfair to allow some the luxury of voting on line. Personation would also be a problem unless adequate safeguards were employed. Similar problems would arise with text voting. Decisions on these innovative voting procedures should not be taken from the view point of city based services.

With regard to electronic voting at polling stations the considerations are slightly different as all would have access. The equipment employed would have to be user friendly and there would be a need to advise some on its correct operation without compromising the secrecy inherent in our Democratic Processes.

Electronic voting at polling stations would speed up the count and would diminish some of the excitement welcomed by some. The disclosure of preliminary results before the closure of the ballot could have an effect on the outcome and should not be allowed.

Penally Community Council (45) – Any of those mentioned are suitable. No electronic method should be introduced to the detriment of the older voter who may not have the necessary IT skills.

Nelson Community Council (46) – None presently. Such systems could be vulnerable to abuse.

Kerry Community Council (47) – No, liable to fraud.

Electoral Commission (48) – The Local Government Committee may wish to consider our published evaluation summaries of this year's and previous year's pilot schemes for guidance on this issue.

Eweny Community Council (49) – The public would see risks in all three methods so it would require a lot of convincing that the system could be secure and reliable.

City and County of Swansea (50) – Voting by internet or on the telephone would be popular options providing the option to vote any time of the day. To offer the elector the option of voting via text or electronically you must be able to assure the electorate that it is a safe and secure way of voting.

At a polling station if the Presiding officer doesn't turn up, we simply get another one, however if your electronic system goes down this isn't so easy to replace.

Any electronic system must be robust and secure against any unauthorised attempts to penetrate it.

Elderly people or people who have a fear of technology might not use this method of voting but would normally vote at the polling station.

Simon Moffett (51) – I am against any voting process outside the polling station, for the same principal reason that I am against general postal voting. I am in favour of electronic methods for recording votes, provided these are with polling stations and supervised to prevent interference with the individual's choices.

I have observed television polls (Can i Gymru) where multiple voting and aggressive canvassing of votes from friends and family have resulted in a distorted result. There are serious risks of abuse through losing direct control of the voting process by allowing it outside the polling station ie- through the net or by texting.

Again education is the key. Perhaps there should be some kind of impartial guidance process offered for first time voters to help them do a dummy voting run with dummy papers at the polling station so that they can understand what is expected of them, and to help them understand what they are doing.

Solva Community Council (52) – Electronic systems could work if they were properly validated, as could the option to vote at a variety of sites and the extension of the voting period over a longer period of time (say a weekend). If voting were made compulsory, with an opt out box, then any or all of these methods would be effective.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Internet terminals at all polling stations and maybe National Post Offices, Banks and major Supermarkets. The benefit would be making it more accessible. However a problem could be the security, therefore it would need to be piloted first.

Lisvane Community Council (56) – Electronic voting could be open to abuse.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – There is or has been an issue of internet access difficulties in remote rural locations. This could have a bearing on how widely used internet/text messaging could be in some places.

Pyle Community Council (58) – Computerised e.g- Belgium and the Netherlands. This

system is quicker more accurate, more reliable and limits human error.

Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – Until the security of such systems can be guaranteed, it would be foolish to adopt electronic voting methods... there is presently no way of ensuring that the data is not later manipulated. The lack of a paper trail is an open invitation to electoral fraud and experience in the U.S.A does not encourage trust in electronic voting.

Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – There continue to be concerns about the integrity of remote voting by internet and text. Electronic voting machines in polling stations are effective and make counting quick and easy; the drawback is the cost of implementation and maintenance.

Children's Commissioner for Wales (63) –

Benefits:-

- The use of such forms of voting would...mean that young people would be able to use voting methods familiar to them.
- The use of such technology could reduce the unfamiliar element of the physical act of voting
- Accessing Polling Stations in unfamiliar venues and the requirement to take identification documents may be a contributory factor to the low turn out of young people in elections as evidenced in the discussion document.

There is a definite need to research and explore the views of young people in other countries that have adopted electronic voting methods. Research into the views of young people could provide lessons learnt should electronic voting be introduced in Wales.

Problems:-

- There are clear concerns that the costs associated with text voting or other forms of voting may prevent some people from being able to vote...This was an issue that was also cited by young people in the advisory groups, along with the fact that some young people do not own mobile phones.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to consider the equality of access that all sections of society may have to technological methods of voting and the impact on turnout. <p>Methods of voting by email and over the internet were identified by the advisory groups as an option which might be cheaper than text voting. However the young people identified potential problems such as access to computers and internet hacking.</p> <p>There would clearly be a need to address security issues in relation to any proposed electronic voting procedures in order to provide assurance that votes cast by such methods are reliable and that the voting process could not be corrupted or changed.</p> <p>Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – Benefits:- Could attract young people.</p> <p>Bronington Community Council (65) – There is no apparent reason for this.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitely the internet and mobile (phones) and also an electronic machine in the polling station. • Yes these methods could be used but they would need to be linked up to avoid double voting. <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – Internet/ use barcodes on voter’s cards. Could be a problem with hackers. The holder of the card may not be the actual voter.</p>
<p>Alternative venues for polling stations (Q.8)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) - Yes – if it was electronic polling. Electors could vote via the internet from home, work or supermarket.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – Yes, supermarkets especially and post offices are visited regularly by some.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - does not support the use of supermarkets as polling stations. Recommends the use of civic premises and/or voters’ own homes.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – yes.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – No.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) –If electronic voting is allowed, supermarkets,</p>

libraries – any public venue - would encourage electors to vote and show we wanted them to engage in democracy and decision making. More and more electors are getting familiar with electronic machinery, whereas elections can be infrequent and the way elections they are conducted is unfamiliar to some electors who do not understand the full process and may be put off by the protocol.

Mencap (08) - These would give an advantage to many of our members if they were more accessible transport wise etc.

Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – there are possibilities and opportunities.

Llangedwyn Community Council (10) – in a very small community such as ours, one polling post is sufficient.

Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – For years certain venues have been perfectly adequate. Why change the system we know works?

Roger Morris (14) - Yes, and obviously there have been a number of successful trials. Largely a matter of practical convenience so long as premises and voting conditions are compatible, and voters are not liable to be influenced by commercial or other overtones. In rural Wales in particular, the availability of convenient nearby premises may continue to be a problem — a point made by Bryn Parry Jones in a different context in para 5.2 of the consultation.

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – other venues frowned upon – polling stations the best option with postal voting for those unable to get to them. Polling booths could have an electronic system of recording the vote.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - Yes, if in conjunction with electronic voting and subject to the same safeguards as for voting in polling stations.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) –Yes – if it was electronic polling. Electors could vote via the internet from home, work or supermarket.

Mold Town Council (19) – Oppose electronic voting but if it was introduced other venues could be used.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – Yes, both supermarkets and post offices, if properly managed under electoral rules.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – Wherever the most convenient location in the community is located. Now access to most schools lost, many alternative stations being used are not as central. Any premises used must have sufficient space for a secure and efficient process.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – alternative venues should not be used. It would be difficult to maintain order in supermarkets etc.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – Yes. Perhaps also stagger over defined period, even over several days?

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Yes provided proper supervision.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) –No – it would be chaotic! “Vote early and often” would result.

Abergele Town Council (27) – Yes, local supermarkets could be used providing sufficient space and adequate supervision. However many post offices have closed and more under threat of closure.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – Where existing traditional polling stations too remote or inaccessible for some, local retail outlets could be considered. One other problem is that often schooling is interrupted.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – Yes.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Are important staffing and security implications. Try pilot schemes in two constituencies.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Yes – although more beneficial with an electronic voting process.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Yes.

Llandough Community Council (33) - In Llandough the voting arrangements at the Institute Hall are the only suitable venue. However in other towns and communities consideration might be given to use of sites near or within supermarkets.

Henllys Community Council (34) - Why not? Although not sure that supermarkets would co-operate without some quid pro quos.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – Not clear what gained by having alternative venues for polling stations. At present there is at least one polling station in every ward. There is certainly not

one supermarket in every ward. Our view is that people are not voting because they don't want to vote – **not** because of difficulty reaching polling station. This suggestion would also trivialise the voting process by equating it to nothing more than an activity to be done while doing one's weekly shop. Would also make it very difficult to political parties to utilise tellers.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Not alternatives but possibly additions.

Penhow Community Council (37) – many issues to resolve – security, staffing. Why would it be an improvement on polling stations?

Mumbles Community Council (38) – No.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – see q.7 above. Security and manpower to be considered – inappropriate for WAG to require unitary authorities or local councils to meet the cost.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Yes, but not sufficiently secure to control effectively.

Amroth Community Council (41) – An idea

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Yes- Post Offices could be good especially as TV licences have been taken away.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Possibly.

One Voice Wales (44) – yes provided adequate assistance was available to voters.

Penally Community Council (45) – Yes but with appropriate supervision.

Nelson Community Council (46) – No there would be insufficient resources to monitor alternative venues.

Kerry Community Council (47) – No, Post Offices too small, disagree with using supermarkets. Support continued use of Community Halls or Schools.

Electoral Commission (48) – See answer to question 7. Our evaluations of pilot schemes in previous years include alternative venues. Pilot schemes in 2006 included early voting facilities in alternative locations, such as in army barracks and care homes.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – Alternative venues could be used provided there was privacy and they gave an importance to the voting process.

City and County of Swansea (50) – I believe that we could explore the possibility of having polling stations at venues such as supermarkets, post offices, however this could only be achieved with an electronic register.

Simon Moffett (51) – I am strongly against alternative venues for polling. Post offices are disappearing at such a rate in the countryside that they are an impractical option in any event. At the same time I am against allowing supermarkets to be used as polling stations as this would further extend their monopoly powers over the individual. Supermarkets are pumping the powers out of rural Wales and should not be given any help to further that destructive process. Supermarkets have distorted political processes with donations and lobbying for their own gain and are likely to look for ways to influence voters who use their premises for voting.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Yes.

Lisvane Community Council (56) – With regard to alternative venues/systems how could you ensure that a person had not voted using all three methods i.e local polling stations, local supermarket and internet? Also if supermarkets were to be used, the logistics of separating the ballot papers into their respective Wards is likely to be a considerable problem for the Returning Officer.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – Yes provided the statutory requirements could be satisfied.

Pyle Community Council (58) – Yes.

Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – No.

Beumaris Town Council (60) – There was support for the use of Post Offices in addition to Town Halls as polling stations.

Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Polling stations can be established in such places now but only for elections in that polling district. To allow voters from other polling districts to use such polling stations would require significant investment in technology to ensure that multiple voting did not occur. This could happen in conjunction with the introduction with the introduction of on-line electronic voting machines in all polling stations.

Children’s Commissioner for Wales (63) – The use of different venues...could encourage young people to vote in greater numbers, especially where there was easy access to such venues...However it is important to note that the provision of alternative venues may not automatically increase turn out on its own. Young people do not always gather and meet in formal settings...so there is a need to explore the underlying issues which may cause the

	<p>reported low turn out of young people in elections. That can only be done through working with young people and gaining their insights into their current low participation rate in elections.</p> <p>A suggestion made by one of the advisory groups was to make venues more attractive to young people, with information stands and “freebies” aimed at young people.</p> <p>Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – (yes)... Supermarkets, Youth clubs entrances to dancing clubs.</p> <p>Bronington Community Council (65) – No.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, with management and care/regulation • Libraries, Post Offices and Bingo Halls. <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – Yes. This would increase the number of voters in all probability.</p>
<p>VOTER TURNOUT</p>	
<p>Why so few young people vote in Wales? (Q.9)</p>	<p>Llangynog Community Council (01) – voting in Wales should be a legal requirement for all residents.</p> <p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – Young people do not relate to politics or politicians. Youth Councils should be encouraged.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – Ignorance and they feel left out.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - many young people are not politically aware and do not feel represented or engaged by politicians. There is a great deal of negative stereotyping of local government and politicians at all levels, in the media.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – young people feel excluded from government.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – Standard of members.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – They do not associate voting and politics being relevant to them, don’t understand that local politics affects them, do not think that their vote will make a difference. Discussions held with electors who say they do not vote are unaware what decisions are made the affect them, by whom and if they do not like decisions made by politicians they can change power by voting an alternative person into power. One young</p>

woman when asked if she would vote for her local councillor replied that it didn't apply to her because she didn't live in a council house. This demonstrates a lack of knowledge around what councils do and how they affect citizens.

Mencap Cymru (08) - Young people with learning disabilities have a low level of registration to vote. Our 'Partners in Politics' project seeks to address this. We will be sending people with learning disabilities into schools to talk to young people with LD/statements of special educational need They will be specially trained to deliver the 'Diversity in Dialogue' programme which encourages self advocacy and involvement in politics. We need all political parties to produce election material in an entirely accessible form- clear, easy to read. How much are the political parties committed to this?

Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – Most feel that politicians do not engage with people.

Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – complete apathy like in other countries. Poor education of responsibilities is killing democracy.

Pontardawe Town Council (15) - answers to Q's 9-13 – there is general apathy about politics in general and youth do not seem as interested in debating societies nowadays. In these groups politics and party politics were often explored and debated. Also, many politicians are poor role models for the young with some behaviour quite unacceptable. Government needs to be more creative in engaging the young.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - Could be due to lower registration of younger people. Also a feeling that the political process does not concern them. Something to be addressed by politicians rather than just looking at the voting processes.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – Young people do not relate to politics or politicians. Youth Councils should be encouraged.

Mold Town Council (19) - apathy and ignorance are main reasons. Politicians have failed to capture the imagination of young people and lack of education (not being part of the curriculum) contributes to apathy and ignorance of democratic values and processes. Should be a duty upon the education system and politicians to make people aware of the importance of voting.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – Indifference, lack of awareness as to importance of engaging in democratic process.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – apathy is principle reason.

Ambleston Community Council (23) – important that young people are encouraged to vote.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – general apathy and lack of interest. Does an individual vote make a difference? The decision making process at local level has been speeded up but as a result appears to be less public accountability and scrutiny. Likewise at national level some people hold the view that the national Assembly has no real power and is merely a talking shop.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Young people like single-issue campaigns and have little interest in “politics” as a whole. Also we suspect they are as disenchanted with politicians as the majority of the population.

Abergele Town Council (27) – seem to have little or no interest in politics, although they may be interested in specific issues such as animal welfare or the environment.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – A lot of parents do not vote today and if young people look to them as examples the tendency will be for them not to vote. Young people working with a Member told him that they had no idea about how the political process works and therefore did not vote through lack of information and understanding.

Llanelli Town Council (29) - Very few young people have any real interest in politics, whilst the vast majority do not seem at all motivated to vote as they consider the political system in this country to be disreputable, and have a general mistrust of politicians, borne out in some measure by regular media reporting of misconduct and other questionable activities on the part of both local and national politicians of all political persuasions.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Some feel that young people in Wales are satisfied with their lot: authorities do not chase them to register. Many young people are unimpressed with politicians. Many take the view that they do not vote because ‘we are not listened to’. Probably not enough information is given.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Apathy of parents; peer pressure; too many other interests; feeling that the government/ politicians do not listen

to young people; too much negativity through the media; insufficient politic awareness through education (although with such 'crowded' curricula difficult to see how additional teaching can be fitted in and would require teacher impartiality to explain 'across the board' party politics).

Penarth Town Council (32) – Politics is seen as older person's monopoly. Politicians speak a different language to young people.

Henllys Community Council (34) - Probably because older people are generally apathetic about politics and this rubs off onto young people. Unless in marginal constituencies people feel that their vote is wasted. Only way to make voters feel that their vote counts is to introduce some form of proportional representation.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Very little appeal in candidates' manifestos.

Penhow Community Council (37) – lack of education/experience. Young people have no forum for learning the system if parents are not politically motivated.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – They do not see the point in it.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – Young people are starting off in work or college. Their priorities are to raise cash and have a home. They find it difficult to relate to how local or national government will help them individually with these priorities.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Because they do not believe politicians listen to them. Examples cannot be given without giving personal details.

Amroth Community Council (41) – They have little or no interest in Politics or do not know, or are not taught enough about politics in school and do not know what politics are for.

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Disillusionment.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Not interested.

One Voice Wales (44) – Young people appear to be disillusioned with our democratic processes. Demonstrating the benefits of government should form a major part in reconnecting with all the electorate. This should begin with local issues by stimulating interest in Community and Town Councils and then lead on to regional and national issues.

Penally Community Council (45) – Lack of knowledge or interest. A perceived belief that it does not matter who is voted into power as it makes little difference.

Nelson Community Council (46) – Some apathy and indifference, but lack of confidence and trust in MP'S and Government is perhaps the biggest issues to be overcome.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Lack of information about our Political system.

Electoral Commission (48) – The Commission has published a body of research on this issue, beginning with *Voter engagement and young people* in 2002. Our reports on elections in Wales in 2003 and 2004 considered the issues in some detail. A summary of our research relating to young people in Wales, produced by the Commission in April 2005, is attached to this response.

The Commission has produced bilingual educational information resources for those who work with young people, such as the Democracy Cookbook and those for use directly by young people themselves, such as the Democracy Disk (exclusive to Wales). The Commission also provides advice, support and materials for use by local democracy officers and electoral officers (described above).

The Commission constantly promotes the need to encourage young people to register and vote to all concerned with the electoral process. Including the political parties. The Commission has arranged interactive events and workshops such as Democracy Days where young people can hear first hand from and question elected members.

Ewenny Community Council (49) –

- i. Probably because of the lack of political debate in the home.
- ii. Politics is not seen as “cool” or “exciting” to young adults who usually have broader interests both inside and outside the home.

City and County of Swansea (50) – High numbers of our under 25's are not voting and will continue not voting as they get older. My experience has shown that the most common reasons that have been given for not voting are

- i. They do not feel they know much about politics
- ii. They feel the present system of governing Britain works well.

Many electors of the older generation vote out of civic duty; however, this sense of duty is not shared widely amongst younger voters.

Simon Moffett (51) – Politicians on the whole don't bother to talk to younger people or ignore them to talk to more mature voters. Younger members of our family, despite being of voting age, have generally been invisible to doorstep or street canvassers "I'd vote for him if he bothered to ask me for my vote".

Standards in public life seem to be very low. The perception of politicians is that they are rarely honest and are in it for their own gain. The system seems to be incapable of disqualifying and sacking these people who are found out.

CEWC-Cymru (52) – We feel that the reason young people respond better to television-inspired votes, either by text or phone, is not the technological means behind such voting per- s, but rather the rapport that those taking part in reality TV programmes build up with viewers, many of whom are young. Changing the available means of voting at elections might increase turnout at them, but more important still is to introduce ways of making young people more engaged and familiar with the people and issues that are at stake in an election. Changes to party political broadcasts, to young people-focussed messages from political parties, to the approaches to education on democracy within schools, and to links between local politicians and schools all have their role to play in that.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Apathy...as a result of various parties squabbling, sleaze and having no respect for politicians in general.

Merthyr Cynog Community Council (55) – We consider the reason few young people in Wales vote is total disillusionment with politicians.

Lisvane Community Council (56) – For the vast majority of voters young and old, they are unaware of the effects the National Assembly has on their daily lives. All too often they are aware of the bureaucracy, pomp and ceremony, which is well publicized, but not how that relates to their own local environment.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) –

- i. No identified purpose for doing so
- ii. Not appreciating how politics affects their daily lives.

Pyle Community Council (58) – They do not feel involved in the process, and that no body listens to them. A lack of knowledge, they feel ignored and just not interested.

Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – Lack of interest... there is an expectation amongst large sections of the younger community that... 'they' will sort things out.

Churchstoke Community Council (61) – (we) would like to encourage and press for the need to undertake early education of young people and continuing education of older people, in the principles of citizenship, democracy, politics and participation. (The Council) sees the long term importance of generating through education, a desire to vote, as well as the shorter term objectives of addressing the means and accessibility of voter turnout.

Children's Commissioner for Wales (63) –

- The inter-relationships between the many legislative bodies that can affect young peoples' lives are extremely complex for most people to understand... This complexity within the system may lead to confusion for many young people and could contribute to the feeling that participation in elections may not affect their daily life and therefore they may choose not to vote.
- The relevance of the political process to daily life may be a key factor in the low turnout of young people in elections.
- Members of the advisory groups stated that they found the political situation confusing and were unclear on which bodies held which powers
- They were also unsure about whether the thought voting actually changed things.
- A feeling that politics is irrelevant to young people.
- There appears to be a need for politicians and political systems to engage with young people, including those below the age of majority to uncover the major issues that affect their lives and how (these issues) can be addressed.
- The ways in which interaction takes place between young people and politicians should be considered.
- Young people are expected to show respect to others but are not shown respect themselves. This can lead to a feeling of alienation from the rest of society and may result in some young people being reticent about voting.
- Uncertainty about the voting process and political system.

Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – Because they are not taught politics and know nothing of our

	<p>history. Also politics is given a poor image on television etc, often politicians do not help.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No feeling that voting makes a difference • No interest- • People think they do not have an influence • Politicians not fulfilling promises/pledges. <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – Lack of awareness, education, “couldn’t care less attitude”. (A belief that all) politicians are corrupt.</p>
<p>Are young people given enough information in schools? (Q.10)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – No.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – A start has been made but this needs to be encouraged.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - young people are not given enough information in schools to make an informed decision about how they are going to vote.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – hardly.</p> <p>Llanor Community Council (06) – No.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – Not unless ALL students are given educational lessons in general studies and teachers encourage local politicians (AM, MP and local councillors) to visit schools giving talks on what their role covers. If all above are from the same party other parties should be encouraged to visit. Not sure that they are given enough information and doubt that it is applied consistently across all schools. Plus citizenship education forms a part of PSHE and therefore has to compete alongside sex education etc. It should be a stand alone element as in England.</p> <p>Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – Could be more awareness in school, but only in generalisation.</p> <p>Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – No. Citizenship is obviously not taught. History lessons should include democracy.</p> <p>Bagillt Community Council (16) – Unitary authority structure should make it easier for ROs and LEAs/schools to ensure students register and continue if going to college, and explaining about polling stations and postal votes. Electronic voting may give more incentive to young</p>

voters.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – No.

Mold Town Council (19) – No.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – No.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – Whole range of educational methods in schools, colleges and universities would be desirable.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – schools provide pupils with information to assist them in making informed decisions on how they are going to vote.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – No – there should be some effort to include voting in the school curriculum.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Depends on school. Not part of national curriculum.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – No.

Abergele Town Council (27) – No. Young people should be taught about government, local governance and citizenship.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – Definitely not.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – No.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – No.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – No.

Penarth Town Council (32) – No.

Henllys Community Council (34) - No. Pupils should be given a greater appreciation of the political system, but not information directly related to 'how to vote'.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – There seems to have been a tradition in education, that politics can be discussed in a general sense, and party politics can be discussed when considering past history; but present day party politics is something which should be kept outside the formal school curriculum. It would clearly be an improvement to have more formal discussion of current affairs, including elections at election time. Many secondary schools have hustings, debates etc around election time, and some invite speakers from political parties. Unfortunately these often take place outside the formal teaching curriculum, and therefore, only a small percentage of pupils get exposure – probably those who will use their

vote anyway.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Schools should steer clear of telling pupils about “how to make an informed decision about how they are going to vote”. It is the principles and mechanisms that require explaining.

Penhow Community Council (37) – No – young people are not taught anything about politics in school.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – No, not done in an interesting way.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – School councils should be further encouraged and perhaps empowered to make meaningful decisions on life within schools – links to local community councils would be especially beneficial as well as general citizenship education. Not enough information is given in secondary schools, teenagers are cynical and need to pass exams. Young people see little need to get involved with community, especially if they see how their parents have not gained anything from their involvement.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – No.

Amroth Community Council (41) – No.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Yes.

One Voice Wales (44) – No.

Penally Community Council (45) – Probably not. So much “political correctness” is imposed by government on schools and the public at large that is had crippled the ability to provide a balanced view without offending someone.

Nelson Community Council (46) – Yes sufficient political awareness is taught.

Kerry Community Council (47) – No.

Electoral Commission (48) – See above.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – Schools should play a larger role in the understanding and importance of political debate and possibly world wide political issues.

Politics needs to be an integral part of the school curriculum and should be debated by the “more mature” section of the school community.

City and County of Swansea (50) – With specific regard to the National Assembly, the position is complicated by the electoral arrangements. As an administrator it is hard to explain

	<p>to the electorate why they are voting for a constituency Assembly member via the traditional first past the post system and why they have a second vote for 4 Regional Assembly members via the proportional representation method.</p> <p>CEWC-Cymru (52) – See previous question.</p> <p>Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – No.</p> <p>Merthyr Cynog Community Council (55) – The council feel very strongly that teaching politics in schools could be open to misuse by prejudiced teachers.</p> <p>Conwy County Borough Council (57) – Not to my knowledge.</p> <p>Pyle Community Council (58) – No.</p> <p>Holywell Town Council (59) – There seems to be adequate information. The problem is that with lack of interest little regard is paid to it.</p> <p>Children’s Commissioner for Wales (63) – (A)wareness of political structures and the voting process is included within Personal and Social Education (PSE) and this area of study is not statutorily assessed there is no measure as to how successfully and consistently these areas are taught within schools. Where PSE is delivered by non-specialist teachers the success of teaching these quite complex matters may depend greatly on the skills and personal knowledge of individual teachers. Therefore, the delivery of political education may be inconsistent across Wales and young people may have varying levels of knowledge in relation to the political process. .. The young people in the advisory groups said that learning about voting in schools would be useful as it would help them to make informed choices, give them more confidence and encourage them to vote. However concerns were raised about PSE lessons and their effectiveness, with the young people stating that lessons about voting should be fun and interactive. (See paper for further breakdown of reasons).</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, but schools have to be careful to be unbiased <p>Breckla Community Council (68) – The council reported a mix of feelings towards this.</p>
<p>Party politics taught in schools? (Q.11)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – Not taught but local members could speak to years 11,12, 13 assemblies.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – Too much political influence and too much pressure on</p>

a bulging curriculum.

Chepstow Town Council (04) - would support and recommends teaching young people about the democratic structure and political process, and that “mock” elections be held within schools.

Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – yes, provided there is equality of treatment. Could be done via mock elections.

Llannor Community Council (06) – No. Everyone for themselves.

Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – So long as all parties are given equal status. Schools should encourage candidates from all parties to visit and discuss their politics.

Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – Knowledge of the process of Government to enable pupils to participate when voting as an adult.

Llangedwyn Community Council (10) – the system of government should be taught in schools, but not party politics, as it would be very difficult to do this in a totally unbiased way.

Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – No. Let the parties take the strain. Constitution and democratic studies should be mandatory, even in primary schools.

Roger Morris (14) - Learning about how your country is governed should be part of the citizenship of everyone. Putting particular emphasis on *party* politics, as opposed to the existence of parties in the system, is analogous to teaching about particular religious denominations as part of the study of religion in general. As ever, inspirational teaching is likely to achieve more than routine delivery of a nationally decreed syllabus.

Bagillt Community Council (16) – Need to be impartial or ensure all parties are covered, which could be difficult for smaller parties with fewer resources. Noted that some schools hold mock elections with pupils representing different parties.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – Not taught but local members could speak to years 11,12, 13 assemblies.

Mold Town Council (19) - politics should be taught in schools and party politics cannot be divorced from the overall topic.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – should not be taught ‘party politics’, but be informed in a balanced and unbiased way.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – party politics should not be taught, only politics in general terms.

Ambleston Community Council (23) – candidates should make greater efforts to meet with young people such as sixth formers and college students and encourage them to vote.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – No.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – The basics of what each party stands for could be explained by teaching staff but not by just one teacher so a balanced view of every party is given. This should be subject to school inspectorate inspection but what about private schools not within their jurisdiction?

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Yes. Follow the Swedish example, and also debates with political parties participating. Teachers should not be allowed to teach party politics.

Abergele Town Council (27) – No. Personal views of teachers may influence young people, who should be able to gather information and make up their own minds. Schools should not become involved in party politics.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – politics should be taught in schools not party politics. Members felt strongly that understanding of local government/politics should be part of the National Curriculum. History is not taught today as well as it was years ago and only by having this in the National Curriculum, for children to have a better understanding of local government and the voting process, would children be encouraged to vote.

Llanelli Town Council (29) - teaching party politics in schools could have an undesirable and even dangerous side, in respect of the political allegiance of the teachers and the possibility of extreme right of left wing political dogma being passed on to pupils. However politics in a general sense should be taught at schools in modular form, similar to other curriculum subjects like history.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – No – but political systems or British Constitution should be taught.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – should not be taught in schools because of the risk of bias. However, if taught, it would be difficult to include

as an additional curriculum subject and the ability and impartiality of the teacher would be extremely important to allow students to form their own opinions.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Yes, through youth wings and school councils.

Llandough Community Council (33) – At Secondary stage education, pupils should be taught the purposes and processes of politics with politicians of all political persuasions having access to this teaching programme. This should encourage new adults to register and participate in the electoral process.

Henllys Community Council (34) - Only if it relates to the principles of party politics, and is properly controlled. Otherwise, it could lead to undue influence by the teacher(s) over the pupils.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) - nothing intrinsically wrong with party politics as a school subject. Some problems:

- a) Tuition would have to include all political parties, not just the ones which currently have the largest number of elected MPs.
- b) Ideally, parties should be given a target (say 2,000 words) in which to express the kernel of their party's message. They could also be asked to give a 1,000 word summary on specific subjects (e.g. world trade, principles of taxation, agriculture, education, health etc) to use for tuition purposes.

Individual teachers will have their own political views and may find it difficult to discuss party politics with their students in an unbiased way.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – No, not possible to be truly impartial.

Penhow Community Council (37) – No – not party politics but the electoral system should be taught as part of citizenship. Curriculum already crowded but this is an important omission that should be addressed.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – Yes, unbiased lessons including all parties.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – Yes, presentations could be provided as long as balanced across the political spectrum and took account of time constraints of schedule. Schools and pupils should be encouraged to participate in their local communities and local issues. There is a

perception that schools are only there for passing of exams or to facilitate further education or employment opportunities - their role and responsibility in the community needs to be clarified.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Not within curriculum, but should not prevent schools from encouraging pupils to debate party politics and have politics as part of general curriculum.

Amroth Community Council (41) – Children should be taught enough to get them interested in their society and get them to vote.

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Definitely not. You cannot keep personal bias out of the teaching. Objectivity.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – No. Avoid Propaganda.

One Voice Wales (44) – No as the politics of all parties would need to be included. This could prove to be very difficult. The general principles of politics should be taught.

Penally Community Council (45) – Teach yes. Indoctrinate no. As with everything, it should be the aim of the teacher to promote and stimulate individual thought rather than force feed regimented ideas. Pupils must be allowed to formulate their own opinions.

Nelson Community Council (46) – No party politics should not be covered in sufficient depth impartiality.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Yes. Provided all parties given equal opportunity.

Electoral Commission (48) – See above.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – Yes see above.

City and County of Swansea (50) – I believe that young people need a basic knowledge of their local council/National Assembly before the teaching of basic party politics becomes relevant. It should be structured to illustrate to young people key policy differences between political parties.

Simon Moffett (51) – Some party politics must be taught in schools, and to gain balance the major parties should be pushed into providing appropriate materials. Effective use of independent commentators should be encouraged also so that a wide range of viewpoints can be seen. Inevitably some bias will be put in by the teaching staff, but this is probably a small price to pay to ensure that children grow up with a respect for the voting process. The history

of the struggle to gain the universal vote that we have today should also be taught so that children understand that the vote is a right that was fought for. They should be encouraged to challenge the attitudes of their parents too in a constructive way. Many people vote the way they do as a result of an early experience with a councillor or shop steward either good or bad.

Solva Community Council (52) - Political information/education is too important to be left to the media and if such information were given to schoolchildren in an unbiased and open manner then this might help the education process and assist in making the general public more involved and aware of the importance of the democratic process.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – No. Only from sixth form college on. From sixth form age upwards they are more able to discuss, debate and express their views. They are also more mature as they approach voting age.

Lisvane Community Council (56) – Politics or party politics should not routinely be taught in schools i.e as a compulsory subject. Teaching staff are already stretched to the limit in trying to cover all the issues which they are required to do in delivering the National Curriculum.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – Yes providing that the independence of the process could be maintained, especially in relation to how the information was delivered.

Pyle Community Council (58) – No. Politics can and should be taught in our schools without the involvement of Party Politics at such an early stage in our children’s development.

Holywell Town Council (59) – No-concerned that this would be open to abuse. You can’t keep adding subjects to the school curriculum as other subjects would suffer.

Beaumaris Town Council (60) - ,, members were unanimous...that part plitics should not be taught in schools.

Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – There are longstanding conventions that local authority employees including teachers should avoid party political bias when undertaking their duties.

Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – Could invite local figures to speak.

Bronington Community Council (65) – The Council believes that party activists should not go into schools but children should be taught about democracy and about electoral processes.

Bethesda Community Council (66) –

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No they have enough work already • Yes in form 6 • The teachers shouldn't but politicians should have an opportunity to. <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – No, Democracy should be taught, not party politics.</p>
<p>Involvement of political parties (Q.12)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – Only if it was a politically balanced programme.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – Only above voting age.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - political parties should be involved in informing young people about politics in schools and other youth groups.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – yes, subject to young people being able to question.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – No.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – see above.</p> <p>Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) –No.</p> <p>Llangedwyn Community Council (10) – we believe that political parties should not be involved in the school.</p> <p>Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – Certainly not. The job of the party is to offer choice through its own actions. Do you not think allowing parties into schools is open to abuse. Germany 1930's every teacher was forced to be a Nazi. The young didn't stand a chance.</p> <p>Roger Morris (14) - There is no reason to be nervous about this provided that the usual safeguards can be observed in terms of access to young people, balance (opportunity for parties to participate) and the avoidance of objectionable material.</p> <p>Bagillt Community Council (16) - It should be a matter for school heads or youth leaders to decide whether to invite parties youth sections in, and voluntary for pupils to attend presentations.</p> <p>North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – Only if it was a politically balanced programme.</p> <p>Mold Town Council (19) - Yes, but in a balanced manner.</p> <p>Coity Higher Community Council (20) – should send information for use as per previous</p>

answer. Exception could be attendance of candidates, who would be given equal opportunity to address pupils, possibly via a question and answer session.

Bridgend Town Council (21) - Any involvement at such institutions must be carefully regulated to ensure no political party 'hijacks' the situation.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – there is adequate provision in this area.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – No, process should be curriculum-led.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Yes provided all parties get a representation.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Yes (see answer to q.11).

Abergele Town Council (27) – No. see above.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – One view is that political parties could be invited to contribute as long as a balance between the parties is ensured. Only relatively mature students say over 15 should take part.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – No, in view of possible risks posed by extreme right or left wing parties.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – No.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – If political parties were to be involved with schools, it should be out of general school time and should involve 'main stream' political groups to ensure an informed balance is achieved. The same applies for youth groups.

Henllys Community Council (34) - No, because it is difficult to see how young people could be given a balanced view of what **all** the political parties believe, particularly, given our current system, in most areas one party predominates, and in some areas not all parties are represented.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) - parties involvement should be closely controlled. National parties can contribute written materials. Local parties can contribute speakers for events like hustings meetings. Individual politicians should not, however, have access to classes of school students by themselves.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – No. Time better spent teaching maths and English!

Penhow Community Council (37) – No.
Mumbles Community Council (38) – See q. 11.
Rhyl Town Council (39) – See 11 above.
HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Only if students/youth groups request such involvement.
Amroth Community Council (41) – Yes limited
Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Yes if the approach is balanced.
Milford Haven Town Council (43) – No.
One Voice Wales (44) – No.
Penally Community Council (45) – Only if all parties get equal representation. Not for the very young!
Nelson Community Council (46) – No it would be impossible to ensure inclusiveness for all political parties.
Kerry Community Council (47) – Debating involving all parties, should be encouraged.
Electoral Commission (48) – See above.
Ewenny Community Council (49) – No obvious support for this as members believe that young people should be informed through the education system, the home and the media.
City and County of Swansea (50) – In promoting democracy, all political parties have a role to apply here, they should be seen to be reaching out to young people- after all they are tomorrow's voters. They should be seen to be involving young people in formulation their policies on such things as education and transport.
Simon Moffett (51) – See 11.
Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – No. Try teaching Maths, English and basic life skills first.
Conwy County Borough Council (57) – No, it is considered that the Electoral Commission could take the lead here.
Pyle Community Council (58) – No. There is a distinct danger of the influence of extreme groups too early in their lives.
Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – Yes provided all parties were

	<p>allowed the same facilities.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Creating access by representatives of political parties to school pupils or in youth clubs would have to be regulated accordingly.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) – See above.</p> <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – No certainly not, they would only promote their own political party.</p>
<p>Good practice examples (Q.13)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – A Youth Council has been operating in the town for several years.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) - West Mon School has a good citizenship programme and initiatives are run by the local authority to raise awareness of how the council operates and of the electoral process. However, it is often difficult to get schools on board even when willing and free resources are available from the local authority.</p> <p>North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – A Youth Council has been operating in the town for several years.</p> <p>Mold Town Council (19) - A ‘Mini Assembly’ has been organised in recent years by the local Deeside Rotary Club involving politicians and young people. Many schools have school councils and these could be developed.</p> <p>Coity Higher Community Council (20) – Yes – hustings, school elections, school councils. Young people are engaged via events and causes such as Live Aid, Sport Relief and recent Oxfam appeal.</p> <p>Llanelli Rural Council (24) – Yes local youth council/forum.</p> <p>Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – a local secondary school has a ‘mock election’. All the candidates were rewarded with a visit to the Welsh Assembly.</p> <p>Abergele Town Council (27) – No.</p> <p>Pontypool Community Council (28) – may have been in the past but not now.</p> <p>Llanelli Town Council (29) – Some Town Mayors have invited school pupils to the Mayor’s Parlour to introduce them to council work, but not to politics in the wider sense.</p> <p>Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Youth councils; School Councils in secondary and primary settings.</p>

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – took part in events at local secondary schools recently but were not well-attended.

Penhow Community Council (37) – One example of a school holding mock elections with senior pupils as candidates.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – local schools in Rhyl have operated school councils for a number of years – Ysgol Emmanuel empowered the council to make decisions which directly impacted on school life and led to the introduction of playground furniture – by encouraging real decisions leading to actual developments on the school campus children are encouraged to recognise the importance of the democratic process. This should also be applied in secondary schools.

Amroth Community Council (41) – No.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Visits to Councils.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Not that we are aware of.

Electoral Commission (48) – See above.

City and County of Swansea (50) – Here in Swansea we have an active programme of community engagement which involves an annual programme of school visits by the elections unit, annual local democracy weeks aimed primarily at young people. We also held a Local Leadership Members' Seminar earlier this year to look at how councillors work within the Community Strategy in order to promote the councillor's role.

CEWC-Cymru (52) - CEWC-Cymru has used a variety of methods to teach democracy in schools. Our most recent set of resources focuses on the skills which young people need to participate in democracy, from effective decision making to campaigning skills. Education will continue to have a big role- should have a bigger role than at present- in convincing young people that participating in democracy should be a natural part of their adult lives. Our 2005 questionnaire, and other research that we have conducted, suggest that many young people feel that they currently do not have the skills needed to participate in democratic activity. In order to counter this, we will be increasing our input on improving debating skills, following our hosting of the World Schools Debating Championships this summer. We are also working with Hansard Society to introduce simulation activities, such as a mock National

	<p>Assembly for Wales election next spring, enabling young people to find out about political and electoral systems from the inside, by playing the roles involved.</p> <p>Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – At present they are few and far between but they are out there and should be encouraged at local Council meetings.</p> <p>Conwy County Borough Council (57) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. As part of the Electoral Commissions outreach programme a day event was arranged locally whereby 6th formers could quiz the media, local county councillors and Welsh Assembly Government Officials, on their work and related issues. ii. li. Attending at School Council election events to explain the democratic process. <p>Pyle Community Council (58) – No.</p> <p>Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – There is an output into schools but not aware of details.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Many authorities promote programmes in Secondary schools about the electoral process, E.g- Pembrokeshire- the County Council has run a series of 6th form conferences in all eight of its secondary schools entitles “your council, your call”, in which pupils take on the roles of Councillors and Council officers, and for a slightly younger age group, the Council assists the young people in running Mock Elections. These programmes have been running since the late 1980’s.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) –Holding mock elections with candidates based on political parties.</p> <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – None that I am aware of.</p>
<p>ACCESS TO REGISTRATION AND VOTING</p>	
<p>Provision for disabled people to register (Q.14)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – If electronic voting was introduced this would be less of a problem.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – Yes.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - identified a role for carers and support staff in assisting with registration.</p>

Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – mobile ballot box seems a good idea.

Llannor Community Council (06) – enough.

Torfaen County Borough Council (07) - No set provision for this service although the offer is made to supply electoral forms in larger fonts. Can encourage electors to telephone and ask for assistance or visit offices to seek assistance from staff. Use telephone/internet registration facility to register.

Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – There is a local authority legal obligation to help people with disability and provided local authority are conforming with this obligation – yes, enough provision.

Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – Yes. My dad is disabled and has never failed to vote.

Roger Morris (14) - Questions 14-16 concern both *registration* and *voting*, which can be very different. When it is no longer just the “head of household” filling in the registration form there will no doubt be many more people who will need special provision or help. Forms should meet large print and other plain English/Welsh standards, and it would be good practice for registration officers to offer direct assistance to anyone who needs it. (Experience with the all-postal pilot voting in the East Midlands in 2004 suggests far fewer people seek this than might be expected, although some allowance must be made for the facility becoming better known.)

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – The new Disability Discrimination Act already covers this.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - a practical issue to be addressed by the ERO but the need to accommodate specified information in bi-lingual format on Form A in Wales causes difficulties with print size.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – If electronic voting was introduced this would be less of a problem.

Mold Town Council (19) - Yes, provided that people are prepared to ask.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – Have been improvements in this community.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – perhaps local social services departments should become more proactive in this regard.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Yes.

Abergele Town Council (27) – No. Help should be offered to registered disabled and a personal visit arranged where forms have not been returned to offer help.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – No. the DDA should be enforced as far as registration is concerned.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – No. I am not aware of any electoral material being produced in alternative formats eg large print, Braille, audio tape. Is this not a requirement of the DDA? Has WAG consulted with appropriate organisations eg RNIB, RNID, MIND, Alzheimer's Society etc?

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – More could be done – use of agencies such as social services, carers, Help the Aged, WRVS, Meals on Wheels etc. Make use of the disabled register to help identify those who could benefit.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Yes, but are people aware?

Henllys Community Council (34) - All polling stations should comply with DDA.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – As registration is via postal communications, the only disability likely to be a significant factor in reducing registration rates is blindness. We would be interested to hear what organisations such as the RNIB have to say about this problem and potential ways to solve it.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Some of the 'registered' disabled meet in groups. They could help with imparting information on transport arrangements, locations etc. What about those without transport in isolated locations? Local Registration Officers should have a duty to display placards with details of transport assistance.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – the requirement for polling stations to be allocated within the relevant electoral ward often results in inappropriate buildings being utilised when a more suitable facility exists just outside the ward – this can lead to buildings being used that are not fully accessible. Postal and proxy voting should be encouraged but more time needs to be made available for disabled people to vote.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Yes.

Amroth Community Council (41) – No.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Yes.

One Voice Wales (44) – Registration officers should be able to assist in the completion of registration forms.

Penally Community Council (45) – Include details with any disability documents.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Not sure, suggest questionnaire to register disabled.

Electoral Commission (48) – The Commission issued comprehensive best practice advice to electoral administrators in 2004 on improving the accessibility of voting and registration and has made recommendations on these issues in Wales and across the UK in our successive election reports. For example, we encourage electoral registration officers to provide registration materials in accessible formats. The Commission is undertaking targeted campaign work to encourage people with disabilities to register to vote. There is always more that can be done to assist people across the range of disabilities to register and vote and that assistance can often best be provided at local level in consultation with local disability groups.

The Commission is currently funding a project in Ceredigion called “my voice my vote” specifically aimed at ensuring that people with learning disabilities are aware of their democratic rights, the purposes of voting and how they can use their votes to make a positive difference to their lives. The project will produce a resource pack and will facilitate an Awareness Day in the run- up to the National Assembly for Wales election of 2007. It will aim to train a number of workers on the specifics of ensuring that those individually with learning difficulties play a full time part in our democratic society.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – Yes.

City and County of Swansea (50) – The key issue for people with disabilities such a learning difficulties or the visibly impaired and the registration process is the Electoral Registration form. The content of the form is prescribed by statute. Hence the form is non-user friendly, mainly due to the large amount of information that has to be included on the form. In order to accommodate all the information, the forms are produced in very small print.

In order to aid registration, we make this form available in large print or Braille. For the 2007 register the electorate will have the option of registration (if there is no change) by telephone or by internet. We also have a telephone helpline and intend to hold registration workshops in

	<p>certain communities of our city.</p> <p>Simon Moffett (51) – As I am against excessive postal voting I do recognise that there should be some provision to help those with disabilities get to a polling station. There may be a case for a roving electronic polling station to visit homes or hostels for the elderly, infirm or disabled.</p> <p>Merthyr Cynog Community Council – Yes good provision is made for the disabled.</p> <p>Lisvane Community Council (56) – In this day and age access should not be a problem and the National Assembly should not be using buildings which do not accommodate people with disabilities. Where there is no suitable building... mobile units should be used.</p> <p>Conwy County Borough Council (57) – Yes in part, but there would need to be clearer guidelines at Central Government level to resource relevant issues.</p> <p>Pyle Community Council (58) – No. More accessible Polling Stations and Polling Proxy voting.</p> <p>Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town</p> <p>Cyngor Tref Town Council (60) – It was generally agreed that the present system made provision for people with disabilities to vote.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – The canvass requirements in the 2006 Act effectively provide for personal household attendance. Perhaps this issue could be the subject of guidance and training for canvassers?</p> <p>Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – No. Postal voting etc helps them to vote... but they don't want to (feel)... isolated from the community.</p> <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – No, Electoral officers could visit disabled voters at home.</p>
<p>Provision for disabled people to vote (Q.15)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – No, some buildings are not accessible to wheelchairs.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – Yes.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - more might be done by way of home voting and home visits from electoral officers utilising hand held electronic recording devices, similar to those used by the utility companies, might have a role to play.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – Yes.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) - Is provision of tactile voting devices, magnifiers, large print ballot papers, the use of companions and assistance by presiding officers. Training</p>

is provided in this authority area for polling staff around techniques for assisting those with special needs or learning difficulties. The majority of polling stations are wheelchair accessible and induction loops are used where available. Polling station accessibility information is provided on all poll cards to help voters with disabilities determine whether they would wish to attend in person or vote by post or proxy. Could lengthen timetable from close of nominations to day of election. This would enable election staff to have time to visit pensioner complexes/ residential homes and assist electors whether they are disabled or not to vote and put their ballot paper into ballot box and not post box where there is no guarantee of delivery to office.

Mencap Cymru (08) - Will polling clerks be appraised of the needs of voters with learning disabilities in future elections, as we are aware of cases where young people have been turned away from voting because they need help reading the ballot paper/ instructions etc?

Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – Yes.

Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – Yes, as for 14.

Roger Morris (14) - Endorse Bryn Parry Jones comments in paragraph 5.2. Both returning officers and voters are well aware of access or other problems, and assistance devices for blind or partially sighted voters are widely available. There is always more that can be done: many people who still want to vote in person may find that parking or gradient difficulties, or the distance into the polling station from the nearest point of vehicular access, make voting physically demanding. When absent votes are freely available it is in part about the determination of voters and returning officers to overcome the challenges: the situation often applies where the actual polling station and immediate environs meet accessibility standards.

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – The new Disability Discrimination Act already covers this.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - In some areas no alternative venue in the control of the local authority exists. There is now additional provision for disabled people and training of electoral staff but practice is likely to vary between areas.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – No, some buildings are not accessible to wheelchairs.

Mold Town Council (19) - Yes provided that a commonsense and sympathetic approach is taken by the presiding officers and polling clerks.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – present rules seem to be inadequate but could be better advertised.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – postal votes must be most practical answer for disabled people who find their local polling station difficult to access.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – there is adequate provision in this area.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Don't know – external voting booth?

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Yes.

Abergele Town Council (27) – No. Not all polling stations have disabled access – should be a priority when choosing stations.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – No. Again make sure the DDA is enforced.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – The position could be improved by learning from other countries' best practice when it comes to helping disabled people vote.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – No.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – No. Identify what improved access and transport is required. Look at methods such as automatic postal votes or mobile voting.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Disability groups should be asked.

Llandough Community Council (33) - Access to voting may be an issue for some people especially with those having a disability or learning difficulties. People with learning difficulties appear not to have the same level of support as those with a physical impairment.

Henllys Community Council (34) - probably not. Again polling stations should comply with DDA.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – Although many conventional polling stations lack full disabled access, most disabled people will be aware of the problems and arrange a postal vote beforehand. Therefore, even if every polling station became fully accessible, we do not think that there would be a significant rise in the percentage of voters. There will be a small percentage of the disabled population who become disabled between the compiling of an electoral roll and calling of an election. This group could be helped by better information about postal voting. Perhaps there could be a form available about arranging postal votes when a

person first registers as disabled. Also, carers in Departments of Social Services, Community Nurses, Community Psychiatric nurses etc could be informed about the need to arrange postal votes for certain of their patients.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – No, see answer to q.14.

Penhow Community Council (37) – Yes.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – Not known - postal voting.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – perhaps employment of disabled staff within polling stations would help identify problems and through publicity reduce and break down barriers.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Yes.

Amroth Community Council (41) – No.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Yes.

One Voice Wales (44) – Polling centre staff should be appropriately trained to assist those with disabilities.

Penally Community Council (45) – Perhaps, but the situation should be constantly monitored. Question 17 seems to provide an adequate solution but how necessary is it when postal voting is already available?

Nelson Community Council (46) – Insufficient date on which to base an answer. Returning officers could have a view on this.

Kerry Community Council (47) – All polling stations should be equipped to cope with all forms of disability.

Electoral Commission (48) – The Electoral Administration Act 2006 implements recommendations of the Electoral Commission and requires local authorities to review their polling districts and polling places at least every four years, with a view to ensuring that all elections in the area have reasonable facilities for voting and that polling stations are accessible to disabled people, as far as reasonably practicable.

Further, the Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires that electoral documents that are given to voters are to be available as appropriate in Braille, in graphical form, in languages other than English, in other accessible formats and in audio form. The Commission will continue to

provide best practice advice to electoral practitioners on these issues. (Also see previous answer which also applies).

Ewenny Community Council (49) – Yes.

City and County of Swansea (50) – There are no purpose-built polling stations, most are not owned by the Returning Officer but rather hired for the day. Returning Officers have to consider the needs of all electors in allocating a polling location and at times there can be a conflict between providing a fully accessible polling station and providing one which is in a convenient location.

To justify the use of a premise as a polling station we have to prove that we have taken all reasonable steps to find an alternative. This can prove difficult in rural areas where there is not the choice.

Here in Swansea we carry out regular polling station reviews and have identified all current polling stations which do not fully comply with the act and have adapted them with temporary ramps, handrails and hearing loops, however this is not ideal and is certainly not the answer to providing full disabled access.

However if the electorate are informed by their returning officer that their polling station is not fully accessible then it gives them time to consider and apply for a postal or proxy vote.

To further provide options of voting for the disabled, then the Government must consider a national electronic register and e-voting to enable the electorate to vote at any polling station or via the internet or their mobile phone.

Simon Moffett (51) – Electronic voting methods may be too difficult for older people or those with some disability or suspicion of electronic media and so there should be provision for some to use more conventional means at a polling station.

Lisvane Community Council (56) – See 14.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – See above.

Pyle Community Council (58) – No- as above.

Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – Yes. See above.

Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Polling station staff are now trained and a consistent part of such training is sensitivity to this issue together with practical guidance... One aspect

	<p>which has caused concern is postal voting for residents of Nursing and Elderly Persons Homes. In Pembrokeshire, I have arranged for an authorised electoral officer (who also works in Social Care) to visit each County Council Home to assist residents in postal voting, if they so wish. A formal procedure has been established to ensure integrity of the system.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) – Yes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctors and home carers could suggest postal votes. <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – As above.</p>
<p>Statutory standards for accessibility (registration, voting materials, polling stations) (Q.16)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – Funding would have to be provided for the work to be carried out.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – Yes, but are they not there already.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - there should be statutory standards for the accessibility of registration and voting material and polling stations within reasonable and practical limitations, but in very rural communities a degree of compromise might be required.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – Yes.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) - Yes. However, there must be discretion where RO are not able to facilitate. The statutory guidance should be ‘as far as possible or practicable’.</p> <p>Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) –No.</p> <p>Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – There is already legal provision to access polling stations.</p> <p>Roger Morris (14) - Detailed prescription is not practical in this context, particularly in the case of polling stations. (Government in any case prescribes the canvass form.) The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 duty based on practicability is well understood and preceded in legislation. It appears to be effective in relation to other kinds of premises.</p> <p>Pontardawe Town Council (15) – The new Disability Discrimination Act already covers this.</p> <p>Bagillt Community Council (16) - maybe merit, but need to ensure that the ERO and RO have adequate funding to meet local needs before implementing.</p> <p>North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – Funding would have to be provided for the work to be carried out.</p> <p>Mold Town Council (19) - there are already a range of legislative rules including the Disability</p>

Discrimination Act.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – Yes.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – Almost impossible to ensure with polling stations. With move away from traditional voting at polling stations, standardising becomes more difficult to envisage.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – Yes.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Yes, statutory minimum standard.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Possibly, but no real problem exists so the need for “statutory standards” is not really necessary.

Abergele Town Council (27) – Yes, should be covered by DDA.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – The EOR should have responsibility to ensure all polling stations are accessible to disabled people and only by ensuring the DDA is strictly adhered to will disabled voters ensure they have accessibility to register and vote.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – Yes.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Yes.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Yes.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Yes, but thought there were.

Henllys Community Council (34) – Yes.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – This looks like a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

Only blind people will have a problem with registration. Most disabled people will have arranged a postal vote; and therefore accessibility of the polling station will be irrelevant for them. May be worth considered the font size of literature and forms. Perhaps default standard should be 14 or 16 point for partial visual impairment.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Yes.

Penhow Community Council (37) – No, what is suitable in some areas eg towns might not work in others eg rural communities.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – Yes.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – current DDA rules should be applicable to polling stations if not

already.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Yes.

Amroth Community Council (41) – Yes

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Yes.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Yes.

One Voice Wales (44) – Statutory standards may not be appropriate as polling centres are not uniform. Minimum standards could be devised taking into account this diversity.

Penally Community Council (45) – No. There are already too many statutory standards littering our lives.

Nelson Community Council (46) – Statutory requirements already apply to premises in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Yes.

Electoral Commission (48) – In view of the new requirements just introduced by the Electoral Administration Act 2006, described in answer to Q.15 above and yet to be implemented, the Commission will assess the impact of those changes before considering whether further statutory change is required.

City and County of Swansea (50) – There should be agreed standards for the accessibility of registration, voting material and polling stations. At present some local authorities are much more pro-active in promoting access than other authorities, it is very much up to each Electoral Registration Officer/Returning Officer whether he/she provides the Electoral Form in Braille-large print, provide for registration by telephone/internet. The same applies to the Returning Officer and how he/she promotes access to voting.

Simon Moffett (51) – Yes.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Assess should be already in place under the Disability Act which requires all public

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – It would help if clearer defined standards would help achieve consistency.

Pyle Community Council (58) – Yes.

Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – It could be argued that there is a

	<p>case for this, as most premises providing services to disabled people are required by law to make adequate provision for access. It can' however be argued that the service can be provided for by other means- (post). Most polling stations are temporary facilities and to make costly provision for just 1 or 2 days every 4 years or so seems an unreasonable requirement.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Certain standards are now required and materials are provided such as specimen large ballot papers and voting aids for the visually impaired. Enhanced standards would require funding. These continue to be concerns about limited choices for polling stations particularly in rural areas.</p> <p>Bronington Community Council (65) – Yes.</p> <p>Brackla Community Council (68) - Yes.</p>
<p>Use of mobile ballot boxes (Q.17)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – The Netherlands and Denmark are geographically flat as opposed to Wales, especially in Snowdonia.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – No need, this could be open to corruption.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - supports use for people who have difficulty getting to polling stations.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – seems a good idea.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – No.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) - Good – however, there are few staff resources available for this – timetable needs lengthening. See 15 above.</p> <p>Mencap Cymru (08) - Mobile ballot boxes would be welcomed.</p> <p>Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) –Not necessary. Already in place are proxy and postal votes.</p> <p>Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – Open to abuse. One ballot box one Presiding Officer is enough.</p> <p>Roger Morris (14) - Do not know whether the Netherlands and Denmark also have widely available postal voting. The use of mobile ballot boxes (which could be quite expensive despite the limited use referred to under question 14) seems to have little purpose when postal voting is available. If not, the case for mobile ballot boxes, supported by a medical or similar certificate, would be much stronger.</p>

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – postal voting covers this – mobile ballot boxes unnecessary.

Bagillt Community Council (16) – Would be for the RO to determine the practicalities and resources required, whilst being able to satisfy candidates and agents of maintaining secrecy.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – The Netherlands and Denmark are geographically flat as opposed to Wales, especially in Snowdonia.

Mold Town Council (19) - unnecessary with the availability of postal voting.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – No.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – sounds a very expensive and cumbersome option.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – not practical in an area like this with sparse population.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – Yes support the concept.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – good idea – on the day before polling day?

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Unnecessary as postal or proxy voting is allowed.

Abergele Town Council (27) – This is a good idea.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – a good idea, however a pilot scheme should be carefully selected ideally in a remote/rural area. Letters could be sent giving people a choice of times and the ballot box would run at the time stated by the majority.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – most definitely.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – could be piloted in nursing homes in two constituencies.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Good idea. Process would need to be developed to identify all those eligible (there should be clear guidance at the time of registration of those who would have automatic right to such a service if one was in existence) Need to identify who would be responsible for taking them around? Such a service may be more difficult in rural areas and have high resource implications.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Good idea.

Henllys Community Council (34) - OK in principle, but how do you identify these people. Also, how can mobile ballot boxes be employed in a cost efficient, speedy and secure manner?

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – would not add a significant number of votes but would be significant potential problems with electoral fraud with mobile stations.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Needs ‘trials’.

Penhow Community Council (37) – would require more staff but could be workable.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – Against, should use postal voting.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – this could be of immense benefit for residential homes, where people are reluctant to go out, nursing homes and hospitals

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Concern about fraud and security.

Amroth Community Council (41) – Good idea for rural areas

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Use of postal vote- should remove the necessity of this course of action.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Not practicable.

Penally Community Council (45) – A postal vote serves the same purpose and is less expensive.

Nelson Community Council (46) – No. Use of mobile ballot boxes could be open to abuse. Provision is already in place for transporting voters to polling stations or to vote by post.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Preferable to postal voting.

Electoral Commission (48) – See 7 & 8.

Eweny Community Council (49) – Security of the process would be open to question. There would be difficulty in establishing what these needs may be. Also, would it be cost effective?

Simon Moffett (51) – I believe there is a case for mobile ballot systems, but I would expect this service to be pre-planned for those who have properly requested it. Mobile ballot boxes should not be hawked around old peoples homes for votes on spec.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – A very good idea, if supervised properly and with a high regard for security in place.

	<p>Lisvane Community Council (56) – see 14.</p> <p>Conwy County Borough Council (57) – Again, if there was a national system agreed after appropriate consultation, then there should be no reason why mobile ballot boxes could not be used in the circumstances described.</p> <p>Pyle Community Council (58) – No. Postal voting is better option.</p> <p>Holywell Town Council (59) – Not required. A postal alternative already exists and there would be security concerns.</p> <p>Beaumaris Town Council (60) - ...mobile boxes should not be introduced; it was believed the present postal voting system worked well.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Postal voting is universally available and probably more practical. Returning Officers could have discretion to use a ballot box in such places as Nursing and Elderly Persons Homes without having to establish a polling station, which requires full opening hours and wider access.</p> <p>Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – Good idea.</p> <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – It would seem practicable.</p>
<p>Reporting by Polling Station Managers (Q.18)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – Yes.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – Yes – although problems are reported now.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) – Yes.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – Yes.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – No.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – Yes, do ask Presiding Officer to submit and act on comments where able.</p> <p>Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) –No.</p> <p>Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – Presiding Officers have opportunity to report in UK.</p> <p>Roger Morris (14) – Informal reporting is already a practice in some areas, and is part of the Electoral Commission’s consideration of performance standards under section 67 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006. Reports should be straightforward and limited to what is strictly necessary.</p>

Pontardawe Town Council (15) – surprised at this question – thought Returning Officer likely to have reports from each station during debriefing.

Bagillt Community Council (16) - The Presiding Officer already has to complete a number of returns. A formal report could be implemented provided it is actually going to be acted on.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – Yes.

Mold Town Council (19) - would be helpful although already happens in most areas. It is essential that the reports are acted upon.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – understand is done in this area.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – would have expected any problems to be reported as a matter of course.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – yes.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – Yes should be mandatory.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – good idea, with copy of the report going to the ‘manager’/organisation of the venue where held.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – Yes.

Abergele Town Council (27) – Yes.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – Yes. Example cited of number of errors occurring at a polling station about which nothing was ever done. This system would mean that issues would have to be followed up and any recommendations addressed.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – Yes.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Yes.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Yes.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Yes.

Henllys Community Council (34) – Yes.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – It may be helpful.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Yes.

Penhow Community Council (37) – Yes – may well provide answers to some of questions in this consultation.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – No. Surely this would happen.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – Yes but not on election day – the Presiding Officer is required to control the station all day and is responsible for completing a number of complicated forms for the Returning Officer prior to often delivering the ballot box to the count station. There is often pressure placed on the PO to deliver the box as quickly as possible for counting to proceed.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Yes.

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Yes.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Non productive.

One Voice Wales (44) – Yes.

Penally Community Council (45) – Sounds like more red tape and expense.

Nelson Community Council (46) – No. This would add unnecessarily to the administrative burden. Verbal reporting of issues at the time or immediately following elections should be adequate.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Yes. Station manager reports would identify any problems, which should be assessed and where necessary acted on.

Electoral Commission (48) – The Commission encourages local election officers to seek feedback from polling stations Presiding Officers on a range of issues, including the accessibility of the voting process. Many local authorities do so, either through feedback forms, post- election discussion sessions or both. As local authorities are now required to review their polling stations every four years (see Q. 15), polling station feedback should inform those reviews. As in Q.16 the commission will assess the impact of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 before considering whether further statutory change is required.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – Yes, but on a trial basis. It could be of use to highlight possible improvements and changes for the efficiency and security of the voting system.

Simon Moffett (51) – Any process which looks at what went well and what could be done better has to be useful if the learning is followed up and applied in future elections. If it is not used then it would be quickly discredited.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (55) – Yes, as it would highlight problems and new ideas for future voting patterns, to better the electoral system.

Lisvane Community Council (56) – We would strongly support the proposal that polling

	<p>station managers should produce a report similar to that of the Netherlands. If incidents occur they need to be reported and measures put in place to ensure they are resolved by the next election.</p> <p>Conwy County Borough Council (57) – This is already done in certain Local Authorities using the Shaw & Sons Report of occurrences in polling station forms, where appropriate. At present though, the reports appear to be for the attention of the Returning Officer and, for example, in the writer’s own Authority are dealt with accordingly by Electoral Services staff.</p> <p>Pyle Community Council (58) – Yes.</p> <p>Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – No.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Many returning officers ask for reports from Presiding Officers and have inspectors visiting Polling Stations and reporting back.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) – Yes.</p> <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – Yes.</p>
<p>LANGUAGE</p>	
<p>Bilingual help and advice (Q.19)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – Should be Welsh speakers available at polling stations.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – In Welsh speaking areas, help and advice should be available in Welsh.</p> <p>Llannor Community Council (06) – Fine.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) –We provide all stationery used at polling stations bilingually. I do not have enough experienced staff, at present, who speak Welsh to provide cover at all stations and it could alienate English only speaking staff who may feel excluded. I am not against this provision in future but do not feel it to be essential in this area.</p> <p>Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) –No.</p> <p>Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – Polling stations I have worked in have been bilingual.</p> <p>Pontardawe Town Council (15) – no problem as documents produced bilingually.</p> <p>Bagillt Community Council (16) - Some areas have more day to day use of the Welsh language and it would therefore be unreasonable to expect the same everywhere in Wales. Bagillt and Flintshire generally has infrequent use of the Welsh language. The ERO/RO has</p>

limited access to Welsh speakers regularly involved in the processes but has facilities to call on such persons for assistance at election or canvass time should the need arise.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – Should be Welsh speakers available at polling stations.

Mold Town Council (19) - The service provided is sufficient.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – could not be resourced in this area, but obviously far more important in other areas.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – seems adequate already for our area.

Aberdaron Community Council (22) – sufficient assistance and advice in this area.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – local experience is positive.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – present system adequate.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – present arrangements satisfactory.

Abergele Town Council (27) – The Presiding Officer or one of poll clerks at each station should be bi-lingual.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – Where appropriate such help and advice should be made available.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – It varies from one polling station to another, and depends largely on whether any polling staff on duty happen to be bilingual. Perhaps a more conscious effort needs to be made by RO's to ensure that at least one staff member at each station is bilingual.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Yes.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – appear adequate but may be beneficial to provide fully bilingual service in some areas. Needs of ethnic minorities also to be considered.

Penarth Town Council (32) – Help and advice should be multi-lingual.

Llandough Community Council (33) - In a diverse community people's first language may be other than Welsh or English. A ballot paper giving multiple languages would be too confusing but alternative languages should be available. Political parties need to account for this in their campaigning literature.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – likely that there will be plenty of bilingual polling station staff available in those areas with significant bilingual populations. Unless there is convincing evidence of a major mismatch of staff with demand, this is just a theoretical problem rather than significant for voting procedures in Wales.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – adequate.

Penhow Community Council (37) – appears OK at present.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – Not necessary.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – Local demographics (perhaps from census records) should determine level of translation required. Polling stations are required to display a large number information posters with each translated which discourages people from absorbing the information. Alternatively the amount of information to be displayed could be limited to perhaps a list of candidates with other information available on request or as leaflets.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – There would be difficulty finding bilingual Presiding Officers and staff in Anglicised areas, but efforts should be made to do so. Other ethnic residents who intend to make the UK their permanent residence should be fluent in English and/or Welsh or Gallic before they can register for voting.

Amroth Community Council (41) – Is there sufficient information available?

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – This is an area dependant.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Not necessary.

Penally Community Council (45) – Adequate.

Nelson Community Council (46) – We believe that where bilingual services are needed they are already provided. It is not necessary to extend these to areas where a need has not been identified.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Ideally bilingual staff should be on duty, but costly. Perhaps interpreters could be available via phone line.

Electoral Commission (48) – This is an issue we considered in our election reports in Wales in 2003 and 2004, when looking at equal access. There is varying provision across Wales. As the consultation document notes, the commission gives guidelines on accessibility of forms and advice in languages other than English and Welsh. The Commission provides al

its public materials bilingually and most are available, for use by local electoral officers, in a variety of languages and formats. The commission is currently working with a representative group of electoral administrators and other relevant organisations in Wales, aiming to achieve a more consistent approach to bilingual provision for electoral registration, information for voters and forms for election candidates.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – Inclusion into a community is the prime issue.

City and County of Swansea (50) – I do not think it would be feasible to equip all our polling stations with members of staff who are fluent in Welsh. We can identify parts of our area where Welsh is predominately spoken and we do ensure that at least one member of the polling station staff in those areas can converse in Welsh. The Electoral Commission provide a very simple guide on how to vote which we make available at the polling station in English/Welsh and 9 other languages.

Simon Moffett (51) – Polling station staff should be bi-lingual as well. Where there are significant numbers locally of those using a minority language then the polling station may need some staff who the voters can easily identify with also.

Solva Community Council (52) – The language issue is complex but we have had no complaints about this issue locally. Any measure which makes it easier for individuals to vote, without compromising the process must be a good thing.

CEWC-Cymru (52) – See 21.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Sufficient assistance already in place.

Merthyr Cynog Community Council (55) – The current advice is perfectly adequate.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – Essential, in accordance with the provisions in the Welsh Language Act. It is suggested that at least one member of each polling station Team should be fluent in English/Welsh.

Holywell Town Council (59) – no problems have come to light in this area although it has not been confirmed that all polling stations are manned by at least one Welsh speaker should the need for bilingual advice arise.

Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Much work has been and continues to be done about standardisation of forms and materials which are produced in Welsh and many are also

	<p>available through the Electoral Commission in other languages. Phil Peters Fishguard (64) – Yes. In fact multilingual provision. Bronington Community Council (65) – Other language(s) e.g Polish may be necessary as Welsh. Bethesda Community Council (66) – It's fine.</p>
<p>BME help and advice (Q.20)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – If the documents are bilingual, what's the problem? Torfaen County Borough Council (07) – Survey area and identify languages needed to be provided to cover these electors. Encourage them to assist with compiling leaflets that would encourage more BME voters. Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – People will vote if they are educated in rights and responsibilities from primary school age. Roger Morris (14) - The increasing use of documents in other languages has been welcome and helpful. As local circumstances vary this has to remain a matter of local awareness and good practice rather than wider specific prescription. Pontardawe Town Council (15) – abbreviation should not be used unless an index is clearly supplied. Bagillt Community Council (16) - This is a question to be addressed by the ERO/RO and possibly political parties. North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – If the documents are bilingual, what's the problem? Mold Town Council (19) - the system should be kept as simple as possible - too much information would prove counter-productive. This should be addressed as part of an improved educational approach. Coity Higher Community Council (20) – as per q.5 - more minority candidates, greater attention to their needs and issues that affect them. Direct contact with community leaders and, through them, the distribution of suitable publicity. Bridgend Town Council (21) –local councils should be best placed to know of any particular ethnic communities and deal with the issue accordingly. Llanelli Rural Council (24) – education and more direct communication.</p>

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – see q. 5. Para 6.5 of discussion document applies here.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – registration is compulsory, for all citizens. Keep instructions for registration very simple.

Abergele Town Council (27) – This should be linked to citizenship and a requirement for all immigrants. Second generation immigrants should be taught about governance and need to register and vote at school.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – All voters should be provided with the same information.

Llanelli Town Council (29) - Please refer to reply to q.5. In addition, more effort needs to be made to ensure that relevant documents are available in each of the languages which different members of the black and ethnic minority communities understand.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Expand advice in relevant languages and provide helplines at polling stations and elsewhere. Make more advice literature available at wider variety of venues in communities. Community workers could help identify specific needs.

Henllys Community Council (34) - Distribution via organisations representing, or catering for, ethnic minority groups.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – In areas with significant black and ethnic communities, adverts in specialist newspapers or discussion programmes on minority local radio stations could be helpful. One has to accept, however, that there is a practical limit to what can be done. Given that there may be representatives from 50-60 different linguistic communities in one parliamentary constituency, it is not possible to make special arrangements for every minority group. Furthermore, making special arrangements for a few of the larger groups could result in claims of racial discrimination from the smaller ones not catered for. We agree that there is an onus on immigrants to take some personal responsibility to acquaint themselves with the democratic procedures in their new country.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – Up to local community leaders to advise people.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – The BME community itself should be encouraged to put forward

candidates for election which would generate interest and encourage participation. There should be more liaison between Electoral Officers and community leaders and the local councillors.

Amroth Community Council (41) – Use papers printed in their own language as well as English

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Documents in other languages.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Nothing.

One Voice Wales (44) – Provide guidance in the appropriate language.

Penally Community Council (45) – Nothing. Better government and informed choice will achieve this.

Nelson Community Council (46) – It is important to avoid positive discrimination. All ethnic groups must be treated equally.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Provided there is no language barrier, they should not be treated any differently than local people and young adults reaching voting age, in trying to encourage them to register and vote.

Electoral Commission (48) – See Q.5.

City and County of Swansea (50) – For the number for BME people registering and voting at elections to increase there has to be better community engagement. Many of the adult BME community have difficulty in completing the forms. Each authority must be seen to go into their communities, possibly via mosques, meeting places, community leaders and holding open days where they can register to vote.

...we can identify areas of Swansea that have a high record BME electors, therefore we always seek to ensure that one member of staff employed at the polling stations would be able to converse in their relevant language. This appointment is made by involving the community groups.

The Electoral Commission produce a number of leaflets/posters in a variety of languages which are available free of charge to the council. These should be made available at all polling stations/council offices and distributed via the community groups.

CEWC-Cymru (52) – See 21.

	<p>Merthyr Cynog Community Council (55) – This question should be posed to BME directly.</p> <p>Lisvane Community Council (56) – The council recommended a community newsletter where any problems/issues could be identified and relevant assistance provided.</p> <p>Conwy County Borough Council (57) – Contact/work with local BME organisations to explain the requirements i.e- spread the word. In writer’s own area, language line is operated to help people who wish to speak in a language other than English/Welsh.</p> <p>Holywell Town Council (59) – One questions the need to make a distinction. Surely all should be encouraged to register and vote.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) – A simplification of documents.</p> <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – See Q.5.</p>
<p>Accessibility of registration and voting information (Q.21)</p>	<p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council (02) – Depends on the person’s literacy.</p> <p>Gelligaer Community Council (03) – Yes.</p> <p>Chepstow Town Council (04) - the forms and information given about registration and voting are straightforward and easily understandable.</p> <p>Roger Brown - Welshpool Town Councillor (05) – not always.</p> <p>Torfaen County Borough Council (07) - As much as they can be but the legislation is very complicated and contradictory at times. Many voters do not understand it and cannot understand why they cannot vote at a polling station when they have not returned their postal vote, or why on the day of election, they cannot vote for a loved one who is unwell.</p> <p>Llanbadarn Fawr Community Council (09) – Yes for the general standard of education.</p> <p>Paul Richards - former PO/canvasser (13) – Yes.</p> <p>Roger Morris (14) – No. With election rules absolute precision often requires many words and elaborate phrasing. The design of the documentation and its wording - both closely prescribed - could be greatly improved. Basic clarity need not be incompatible with more explanation of details.</p> <p>Pontardawe Town Council (15) – simplification of all documents should always be foremost in the designer’s mind.</p> <p>Bagillt Community Council (16) - To certain members of the public any official form can be daunting. Notwithstanding the need to comply with statute, steps have been taken locally by</p>

the ERO/RO to obtain seal of approval for English and Welsh plain speaking.

North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (18) – Depends on the person’s literacy.

Mold Town Council (19) - the forms and information are straightforward and easily understandable. There are however, concerns over the eligibility of some EU residents to vote.

Coity Higher Community Council (20) – Yes.

Bridgend Town Council (21) – all literature needs to have as few words as possible, block capitals preferred wherever practical for those with sight and reading difficulties.

Llanelli Rural Council (24) – No.

Wenvoe Community Council (25) – Yes.

Burton Community Council, Pembrokeshire (26) – No. Instructions for postal voting quite complicated. Elderly find them confusing and not always easy to find someone to verify identity (use of signature and NI number would make it easier). Use simple instructions like “Put a cross by the name of the person you wish to vote for, put in the envelope, and post it”.

Abergele Town Council (27) – No, they are not as clear and straightforward as could be.

Pontypool Community Council (28) – No, especially at the European elections. Members have known people turn away from polling stations because of complexity of forms, therefore information has to be as simple as possible to encourage voting. Has to be recognised that current system for the European and Assembly elections do lead to greater complexity than the first past the post system.

Llanelli Town Council (29) – No.

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Generally Yes, but see comments in q.14. Also postal votes system is too complicated.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Yes, although helplines would be of assistance. Particularly where a large number of candidates standing and more than one vote can be cast (especially if postal votes being used). Dates of birth to be used to eliminate frivolous registrations such as of family pets.

Penarth Town Council (32) – No, they are not straightforward. Should be written in plain

English.

Henllys Community Council (34) - have no difficulty understanding them, but appreciate that others might.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – By its very nature, some forms are going to be complex. For example if there are five constituency candidates and ten Regional List candidates in the 2007 Welsh Assembly Government elections in Ceredigion, then the bilingual voting form will be complex. It may be helpful for forms to be checked for the reading age of the text. Adverts prior to election day to inform people about what to expect on the voting forms (especially if more than one election on the same day) would be helpful for many voters.

Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council (36) – better spacing and layout required on bilingual forms.

Penhow Community Council (37) – Yes.

Mumbles Community Council (38) – Yes.

Rhyl Town Council (39) – the format of forms seems to change on an annual basis suggesting that a standard form is not required by law – perhaps this should be required. However forms will only be read if people feel a desire to vote and interest in the system. As such the forms should be user-friendly and include details of benefits of voting and how it can make a difference.

HaverfordWest Town Council (40) – Yes.

Amroth Community Council (41) – Not always clear enough for those with limited abilities.

Llangunllo Community Council (42) – Mostly.

Milford Haven Town Council (43) – Yes.

Penally Community Council (45) – Yes. Anyone who is interested is able to register and vote.

Nelson Community Council (46) – Current information given on voting papers is understandable.

Kerry Community Council (47) – Yes.

Electoral Commission (48) – For the autumn annual canvass 2006, the Department for Constitutional Affairs prescribed a revised and redesigned voter registration form, produced

following consultation, with a view to it being more easily understandable. This is available in English and Welsh. The Commission produces information about voting in formats which are designed to be straightforward and easily understandable. The Commission also produces easy guides to voting for young people and for adults with learning difficulties in graphical forms. All the Commission's materials are free to order for local electoral officers. The Commission is producing such materials tailored to the National Assembly elections in 2007. Also see Q.s 7 & 8 for lessons learnt from pilot schemes.

Ewenny Community Council (49) – Registration should not be a problem for the majority of the population, providing you have a command of the language being employed. Voting could be more problematic, particularly with the system used for the elections to the Welsh Assembly.

CEWC-Cymru (52) – On the accessibility of written materials, it is not only Welsh speakers or black and ethnic minority groups that struggle with understanding the language in which elections are conducted. The language used on forms and on the media throughout the process needs to be easily understood and jargon-free, for those with special education needs and others to feel more comfortable and informed about the process. Putting candidates' pictures next to their names on ballot sheets as a matter of course should be given serious consideration too in this regard.

Pembrey and Burry- Port County Council (54) – Normally yes, but if there is more than one election taking place on the same day, it can be confusing for some of the electorate.

Merthyr Cynog Community Council (55) - The form and information is clear and concise.

Conwy County Borough Council (57) – In general yes, however the present reluctance of the Plain English Campaign (PEC) to allow its crystal mark on bilingual documents with for example, the Welsh and English version appearing side by side on the same document, is considered unsatisfactory and should be pursued further with 'PEC' with a view to resolving the issue.

Pyle Community Council (58) – No. They should be made more user friendly, shorter and with clearer instructions given, avoiding complex notes.

Cyngor Tref Treffynnon Holywell Town Council (59) – Yes.

	<p>Beaumaris Town Council (60) -... Councillors were unanimous in the view that the present arrangements were easily understood and straight forward.</p> <p>Pembrokeshire County Council (62) – Simplicity of language is less evident (in regards to the registration forms), the practical difficulty being that we are dealing with a legal process which has to be described accurately to avoid misleading voters. Electoral staff are now regularly trained including in customer care which helps them to identify and support voters who require assistance.</p> <p>Bronington Community Council (65) – We presume that registration is done through the council forms. These appear very straightforward. The voting papers are more complicated than they used to be.</p> <p>Bethesda Community Council (66) – Sometimes. Some still register under age individuals.</p> <p>Brackla Community Council (68) – No.</p>
<p>GENERAL / MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS</p>	<p>Connah’s Quay Town Council (17) – Councillors indicated a need to review current arrangements but felt that the questions, a number of which they could not answer or were irrelevant, had not been drafted correctly.</p> <p>Bridgend Town Council (21) – other matters to be raised on a national basis: Timing of polls: with decline in voting, has it something to do with traditional day of Thursday? Maybe a weekend day would now be convenient for more voters, indeed holding an election over two days might produce higher turnout. Time of poll should be standardised, preferably 7am – 10pm for all elections.</p> <p>Cost of local government by-elections – town and community councils: has become very clear to our council that holding occasional by-elections is very expensive – a recent by-election with 19% turnout cost the council £3644 – ie £4.55 per vote cast. In the course of a 4 year life of a town/community council, several such by-elections might occur at considerable cost to local taxpayers. It may be that serious consideration should be given to co-option mid term as the only option to fill vacant seats, thus saving considerable expense. Should also be a preference for conducting the count on the next normal working day for the council, thus saving in our case 15% of election cost by avoiding evening overtime payments.</p>

Clive Green, Community Councillor (30) – Disappointed that consultation does not raise making voting compulsory or changing the polling day to a Saturday or Sunday.

Cowbridge (Ancient Borough) with Llanblethian Town Council (31) – Overall feeling is that only way to achieve marked increase in voting is to make it compulsory.

Ceredigion Green Party (35) – The fall in voter numbers is a cause for concern, we do not feel, however, that it is due to any intrinsic difficulty in the voting process. People do not want to vote! The main reasons are likely to be:

- 1) People do not identify with elected politicians or feel that those elected will take any notice of what they themselves may feel.
- 2) People feel their vote will be “wasted”, either because they are in a safe seat, or they would like to vote for a small party which is unlikely to be successful. (We note your comments in paragraph 1.10 and accept that this consultation is not about proportional representation – you do have to accept, however, that this is a big factor; and that voter numbers are not likely to increase significantly unless this matter is addressed.)
- 3) There is still a legacy of the poll tax. Some people (mistakenly) believe that if they avoid going on to the electoral register, they can avoid taxes.
- 4) Centralised, UK-wide campaigning has become increasingly the focus for all election campaigns. This includes the London-based print and broadcast media which now dominate the election campaigns. 25-30 years ago, local issues played a much more prominent part in most election campaigns. This automatically led to more involvement of voters generally. (The dearth of independent candidates recently is testimony to the increasing importance of centralised campaigning.)

Rhyl Town Council (39) – Failure to register has a detrimental effect on other areas such as section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 which regulates the ability of community councils to spend monies on activities not otherwise provided for in law.

People need to have a purpose in voting – if nothing seems to change, disillusionment sets in.

Consideration should be given to changing polling day from Thursday to weekends (perhaps over two days) to encourage people to work to exercise their vote.

More ongoing contact between electoral registration officers and organisations within the local community should be identified as good practice and encourage participation.

Meetings of local authorities and Assembly regional committees should be held at different times of day (including weekends) to facilitate local community participation.

Cost of elections and particularly by-elections - should be met by central government not local councils or unitary authorities. This would lead to a more consistent approach. Currently it is more cost-effective to co-opt new council members than hold an election and this often means minimal publicity for casual vacancies to avoid costs of a full election. Funding of elections should be considered as part of this consultation as reluctance of local councils to incur election expenses can undermine voter participation. For example displaying a notice of election is free in the local post office but unlikely to be seen by local people. Local press advertising is more effective but costly to the local council. If an election is called a decision is required as to whether to issue poll cards which can be expensive for the council. Staffing of the polling station and count is undertaken at the direction of the returning officer and recharged to the local council. Town and Community Councils have very little input into the level of fees charged by unitary authorities but must meet these charges.

All the above can have a major impact on local council's budgets especially if more than one casual vacancy arises in a year and creates a potentially negative view towards holding elections rather than co-opting new councillors. Any new proposals implemented should take account of the additional financial burden placed on smaller councils, particularly regarding additional staffing, and these costs should be met centrally.

Solva Community Council (52) – If there is concern about failure to register, then it would appear that some at least of the general public are not aware that registration is compulsory.

Pyle Community Council (58) – There is a need to introduce a system of Proportional Representation for ALL Elections and to rigorously restrict the election expenditure for ALL

parties and individuals.