Pride in Place?

A findings report

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What's in the report?

This report includes:

- A short introduction to the Pride in Place project (Introduction, Page 3)
- Information about how the project was done, including the ways that people in the communities of south west Wales participated in the project (Pages 4-8)
- A series of stories and proposals for future research to help understand Pride in Place in south west Wales. (Pages 9-20)
- Five concept maps which bring together key themes about Pride in Place in south west Wales (Pages 21-31)
- Some conclusions about what to do next and how this could affect policy (pages 32-35)
- Additional evidence (Pages 36-40)

Introduction

Pride in Place? reports the findings from a south west Wales Community Listening exercise. The Community Listening took place in September/October 2022 with a hybrid (face-to-face and online) co-production event in November, to deliberate the initial findings. This report brings together the learning from both the Community Listening and the conference.

This project was done in order for researchers at Swansea University to understand the real concerns of people in the communities of south west Wales. The aim was to encourage people who do not usually work with the University to tell researchers what they thought about the places where they lived and the things that would help build pride in their neighbourhoods.

Using the report

The findings from the project are in two formats: 'stories' and 'concept maps'.

Stories: The authors have composed 12 composite stories, creatively combining verbatim quotes from different participants, ascribing them to a fictional person. This technique gives a strong 'voice' to the participants. All characteristics of the fictional person are found in one or more of the actual participants. Each story is supported with recommendations and tips for our four audiences:

- people living in south west Wales
- policy-makers and funders, usually from local authorities
- people who provide services or work with communities (doers), from a range of sectors
- academics working in universities.

Unless indicated by italics, the notes for different audiences all originate in what participants themselves said. Notes in italics were added by the authors.

Concept Maps The five concept maps show the key themes from across the Community Listening exercise and co-production conference. These indicate areas needing exploration using methods designed to create the robust, localised, granular intelligence needed for evidence-informed policy-making.

What we did

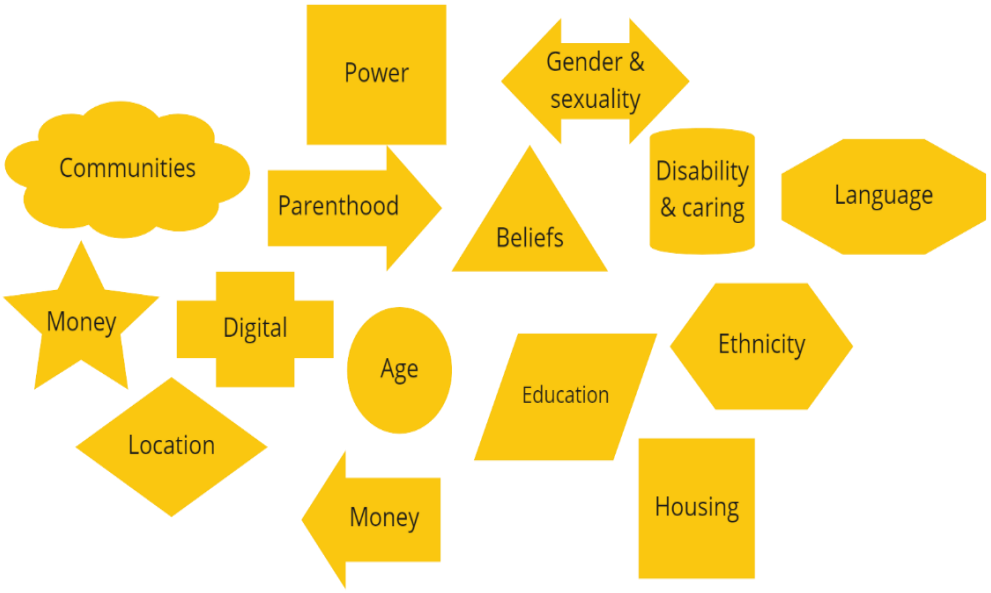
The Community Listening used a novel method, PLACE. PLACE is designed for democratised foresight work and for addressing issues that are best understood as complex adaptive systems. In summary, PLACE involves:

- TiG, a transparent and evidence-informed way to decide who to invite to take part, usually involving (as in this case) a Rapid Evidence Review
- an approach to listening that allows people to talk on their own terms rather than respond to questions
- a 'double analysis' method that begins with reflexive thematic analysis and then a second analysis against specific questions or topics of interest provided by the person commissioning the Community Listening
- presenting the findings to a mixed group of stakeholders in a co-production event
- commitment to reporting what is learned to participants.

PLACE is described in the companion report: Community Listening, a Methodology.

We also made a film with some of the people who took part, it's on the internet at https://app.frame.io/v/6dfc257d-6572-484f-9f1b-f2e218186280

Taking part in the initial work



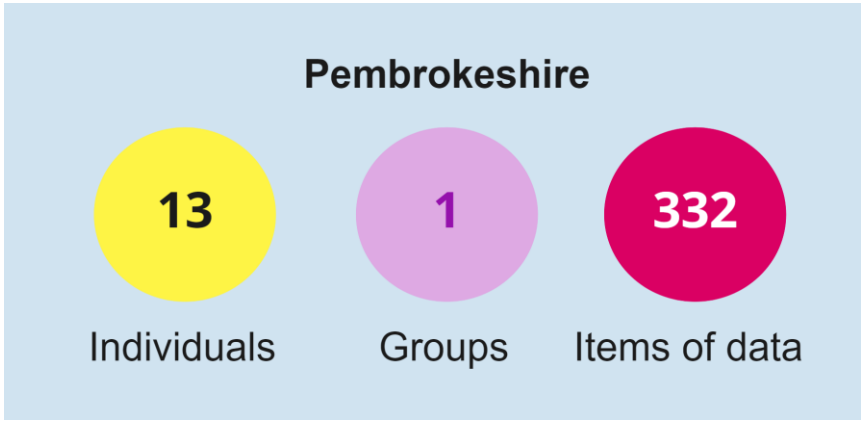
There were three ways to participate:

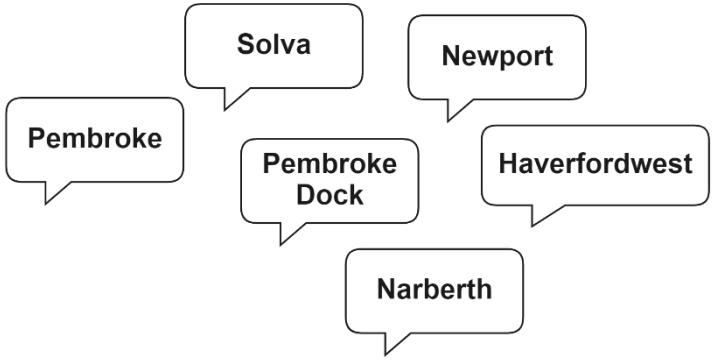
- a one-to-one informal conversation at a time and place of the person's choice
- one of the team attending an existing drop-in, meeting or group
- completing a survey.

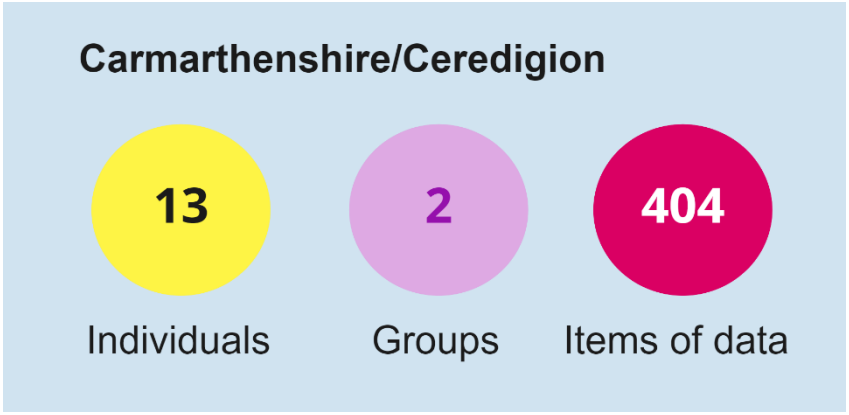
The survey is not part of the PLACE method but provided an opportunity for those not selected using TiG to contribute. This ensured that no-one was actively excluded from being heard.

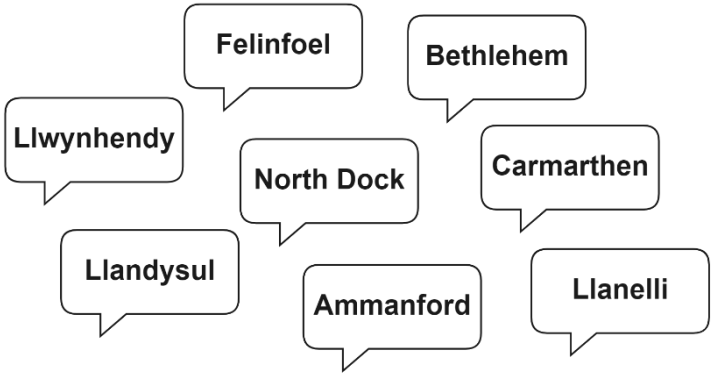
Humans have a diversity of personal and community contexts, backgrounds, and stories. We wanted to listen to the richest diversity of people possible. The Rapid Evidence Review suggested 15 characteristics likely to affect how people felt about where they live. These were used to create a bespoke TiG that guided who was involved.

Using TiG to guide recruitment, a total of 67 conversations were arranged along with visits to 11 groups. They came from diverse communities across south west Wales. Within each county we picked representative neighbourhoods to engage with – shown in the speech bubbles. We also had a larger group of participants who were international students. In addition, a further 71 people contributed via the survey.









Swansea

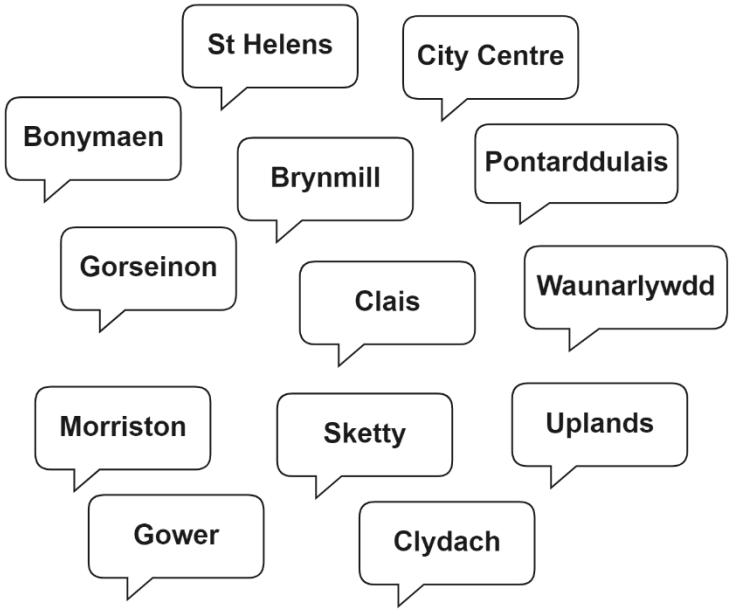
18	5	415
Individuals	Groups	Items of data

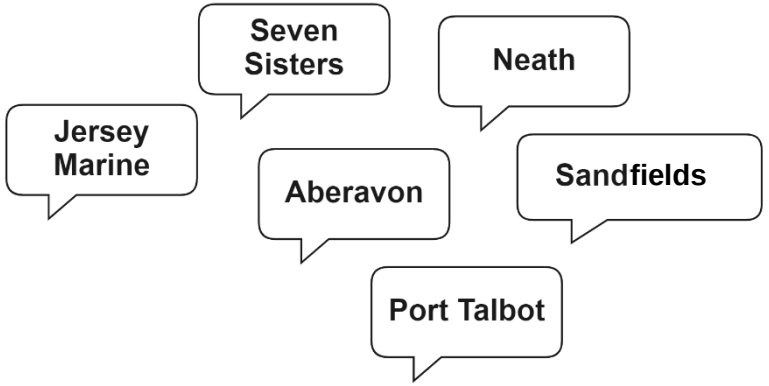
International students

11	0	341
Individuals	Groups	Items of data

Neath Port Talbot

12	3	296
Individuals	Groups	Items of data





The Co-production event

There were 28 participants (seven joining remotely, 21 joining in person). There were two hosts (Bryan Collis and Anne Collis), a translator and two filmmakers from Stori Cymru. We made sure the event was accessible to people with learning disabilities and those with physical impairments and offered support to attend where this was needed.

Participants came from four target audiences: people living in south west Wales; policy-makers and funders; people who provide services or work with communities (doers); and academics. There were participants from all four local authority areas. Participants listened to a presentation of the interim findings and then spent time in one of four workshops with all four audiences represented. These workshops discussed and added to the findings and prioritised three issues for further work. They then discussed the first steps to doing something about one of the issues identified in the first workshop.

The workshop notes were typed up and checked against the original findings for additional or variant information.

Creating the stories

The stories bring the findings to life. A review of the findings identified 12 key topics for stories. The review took into consideration the strength of participants' feelings, significance for public services as they seek to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act and/or the Levelling Up agenda and volume of data. Each story contains as much verbatim data as possible, drawn from more than one conversation. These are woven into a fictional story ascribed to a fictional character. Each fictional character is a composite of genuine participants, drawing on demographically significant characteristics. Taken as a whole, the stories and the characters provide a fair representation of the findings. Notes alongside these stories provide guidance for communities, policy makers, academics and front-line workers and volunteers who are known as 'doers'.

Creating the concept maps

The findings as a whole can be understood in terms of five concepts: relatedness, place, services, economy, and personal. There is a map for each of these concepts that shows how participants thought about them.

The stories

All information in the stories reflects the views and contributions of participants. The notes are drawn from an analysis of participants' contributions **except** for notes in italics that have been added as suggestions or recommendations by the report's authors based on their practice and academic expertise.

Joe's story: Antisocial behaviour

"The kids are terrible, breaking things and dropping litter. There are gangs of them hanging around town afternoon to late evening. The teenagers hang around the back lane drinking, smoking, and chucking bricks. I've seen them smoking weed in the park. I don't feel comfy or safe being out at night. They can be intimidating.

The person next door had someone throw eggs at their car. There's no pride here. People speed down the road and park on the pavements. The toilets got vandalised and there's broken glass on the beach. People let their dogs do their business anywhere and I got a mouthful of abuse when I said something".

Joe, 35, has learning disabilities and lives in town centre housing.

People living in south west Wales

Some of Joe's problems, like dog mess, littering and speeding, are the same across the region. Some only affect parts of the region, often just a couple of streets in a town or city. Joe's experiences seem extreme, but they are daily life for some people living in South west Wales.

If these problems affect you, you can report them to the police and your local councillor.

Policy-makers and funders

Antisocial behaviour has a negative impact on people's lives. As a region, we need to tackle the causes and not just the symptoms. *This means taking time to listen to people, including the people causing Joe's problems, to work out what lies behind these symptoms. Before funding interventions, check for possible unintended consequences by asking carefully selected diversity of people what they think will happen if that intervention goes ahead.*

Doers

Antisocial behaviour is one of the biggest killers of pride in your area. *If you are on the front line, you almost certainly hold valuable knowledge that needs to be heard by policy-makers. What's the most effective way for you to get that information to them?*

Academics

Research priority: How do we address youth antisocial behaviour effectively?

Is there research that could identify the causes? Is there already evidence for what works that can be shared locally? Is there a need for new research?

Sian's story: Lack of character in the local area

"It's ok where I live but it could be anywhere. There's no character, nothing to be proud of, nothing that makes it a real community. The houses could be anywhere. There's no local rugby team. The only pub left open is a chain. Even the shops are faceless, the sort you get everywhere. I miss where I used to live. That was a close knit, bit rough in places, but we had a real sense of identity. We knew who we were".

Sian, 30s, urban, single and unemployed.

People living in South west Wales

It is much easier to feel proud of your area if it has its own identity and character. *Are there ways you can re-start local traditional events or create new ones?*

Policy-makers and funders

Independent local shops, pubs and sports teams help create a sense of identity and community. Are there ways you can support that? For example, are there ways to remove some of the barriers to local people working together or individually to open independent shops and pubs?

None of the participants thought in terms of Swansea Bay Region or South west Wales. They almost exclusively talked about their identity as rooted in their hyperlocal area (e.g., Bonymaen, not Swansea), their sports team (e.g., Scarlets) or in being Welsh. The implication for people's engagement in consultations at the regional level is that people will need to be made aware of the consultation's significance for the area with which they identify.

Doers

When a sense of community has been lost, it sometimes needs outside intervention to bring people together. *Can you use schemes like the Community Ownership Fund to bring people together to take community ownership of facilities that have been lost?*

Academics

Research priority: Why is a sense of local identity so important to Pride in Place, independent of the economic status of the people or area? What role do independent shops and pubs play in creating a sense of community?

Participant suggestion: Use data to highlight key issues that need addressing at community place-based level and in relation to communities of interest.

Freda and Huw's story: Isolation

"I don't know anyone anymore. It's just strangers on the street when I walk to the post office. Some of them are nice enough, but I don't know who's who here anymore. Since Huw had his accident, we stopped going out and had to give up the car. That made life hard. If we didn't come here, we wouldn't see anyone one week to the next.

Our daughter moved to England and can't visit as often as she'd like. She's got her own family to look after we keep telling her. But she got worried about us and joined our local online group. That's where she heard they'd started a drop-in café at the community centre. So, she contacted them and sorted someone to give us a lift. It's made such a difference."

Freda, 80s, attending a community drop-in.

People living in south west Wales

Across the region, hundreds of volunteers have set up and run community hubs, drop-ins and warm spaces. Stories like Freda show the value of their work. An online presence makes it easier for those who don't live locally to find activities, resources, and support for local family members.

Policy-makers and funders

Volunteers are an amazing resource, but they need financial and policy support to continue and develop their work. Most of the participants who are involved in setting up and running activities like drop-ins had invaluable support from local councillors and local area co-ordinators.

Doers

It can be hard for someone to find out about local activities. It needs a combination of methods for getting the message out, including going online and putting up notices in local shops and health centres.

Academics

Participant suggestion: Lectures to community groups and free short courses at community centres, including short courses to compensate for 'missing education' on IT and running a business.

Max's story: young, Trans and homeless

"The worst thing is my area is too crowded and the rent and council tax is too high. People can't find houses to rent, let alone buy. Short term zero-hour contracts mean you can't afford to rent or buy locally, so communities break down and people leave. Prices have risen through the roof. I got kicked out when I told my parents I was Trans. I was on the streets for a while. I couldn't have survived without help from some of the churches and the foodbanks.

Housing sorted a hostel, but some of the others gave me trouble. I'm lucky now, I've got some friends who are letting me stay for a bit while I get my head together. I'm waiting to hear from the council about a flat. I made a complaint against one of them. They say they are inclusive, but the worker kept using my dead female name and not my real name and calling me 'she'. I did OK at school, but no-one suggested going to uni. I wish I'd been able to give it a try, because I kind of wish I had more to look forward to than flipping burgers at the beach café for the season."

Max, 20, semi-rural, unemployed, homeless, and trying to build a positive future.

People living in south west Wales

Many Trans and other LGBTQ+ people experience high levels of discrimination and live in fear of verbal and physical attacks. It helps hugely to have allies who will speak up if they see or hear discriminatory or abusive talk. It also helps to have shop owners and businesses willing to display symbols associated with LGBTQ+.

Policy-makers and funders

Max's story illustrates how issues intertwine. For him, housing prices, discrimination, job prospects, community activism, education opportunities, community networks and housing policies all contribute to his current situation. Policy-making needs to look at wider systems, not focus on individual issues. This may require re-visioning how budgets are allocated and combined.

Doers

There are many lessons from Max's story for service providers. The challenge of accessing appropriate and respectful services was shared by most of the Black, Asian, LGBTQ+ and disabled participants. There is still a need in South west Wales for effective equalities training.

Academics

Research priority: "Young, Trans and Welsh": lived experiences. The research should involve Trans Aid Cymru.
Practical suggestion: Make the university more accessible to local young people. For example:

- Design short university courses and the opportunity to stay in halls for people with learning disabilities to learn leadership and practical subjects.
- Visit classrooms and youth clubs and offer summer residential tasters of university life for young people from across the region as part of raising aspirations and making them aware of the diversity of career options available.
- Offer apprenticeships and make young people from across the region aware of degree apprenticeships.

Dewi's story: You don't know what you have until you lose it

"I wouldn't say I ever felt proud of where I live because we had a community centre. But since it closed, the place has gone downhill. It's got so bad we are seriously thinking of moving. There's nothing for the youth now except standing on the street and causing trouble.

We had all sorts of things for the community, we had a Wednesday cuppa and chat, and a lunch club for OAPs, and at Christmas we had all sorts going on. That's all stopped now too. There's nowhere for us to meet up and do things as a community anymore. Just goes to show, you don't know what you have until you lose it."

Dewi, 50s, made redundant 11 years ago and has stopped hoping to get a job.

People living in South west Wales

Safeguarding community spaces is vital. *There is a community asset transfer scheme to help with this. You can find out more from Wales Council for Voluntary Action or Cwmpas*.

Policy-makers and funders

Some areas don't have money to fund services in the way they were once able to. Lack of funding slows down maintenance and the ability to create new facilities. *This impacts on how people feel about their area and their lives and can lead to a downward spiral.*

Doers

Where community spaces are under threat, work with local community members to identify any potential for using the community asset transfer scheme.

Academics

Research priorities: Ways to protect and future-proof listed buildings; how to create a future of High Streets where people walk around and enjoy sharing space and building community.

Sakura's story: Mixed experiences

"I cannot say thank you enough to all the people who have helped us. We came with nothing and now we have everything we need. People from our community, from the mosque, help us and women from the church near our temporary house visit and help us too.

But I must tell you, last week when we were coming from the mosque, this man was shouting at us to go back home. I just held my children closer and looked down and kept walking. But I tell you I was so scared."

Sakura, 30s, recently granted indefinite leave to remain after claiming asylum.

People living in south west Wales

Many people across the region have worked hard to support and welcome asylum seekers and refugees. Discrimination still occurs and there are many myths about asylum seekers and refugees. It is helpful for people living in south west Wales to find out the facts, develop confidence to be allies and learn ways to welcome people into their communities.

Policy-makers and funders

South west Wales is providing a mixed experience of community cohesion. At one level, current policies, grants, and programmes are effective. At another, racism is still a daily experience for too many. Listening to people like 'Sakura' **and** those perpetuating myths and racist beliefs is vital for the future.

Doers

Much amazing work is happening at the community level. Those on the front line need to develop confidence and channels of communication to feed what they know to the policy-makers at the local, Welsh and UK levels.

Academics

Research priority: Collating and disseminating facts about immigration and asylum-seeking in South west Wales.

Eleri's story: Impact of new housing

"I'm 60 now and until the new houses got built two years back, I'd say I knew everyone here. I went to school with most of them. We'd see each other at the chapel and have a good chinwag in the shop – all in Welsh of course. We looked out for each other. I'm really proud of our little community.

But these new people, most of them aren't from around here and I've not met one who moved from a Welsh-speaking community. They come on holiday, love the area and buy up anything they can get. They aren't like me. Me; it's our community I'm proud of. Them; they can't stop showing off to visitors about the scenery and boasting about being able to live here. Most of them aren't interested in village life at all – or try to take over and tell us what to do."

Eleri, 60, Welsh language, rural.

People living in South west Wales

Welsh language is about culture, heritage, and community as well as the language itself. Learning the language is important. To strengthen community, it is also important for Welsh-speakers to help learners to understand and access the culture and community.

Policy-makers and funders

The housing and community issue is not just second homes and holiday homes. Building new housing can negatively impact an established community, more so if the everyday language of the established community is Welsh.

Doers

Where there are plans for affordable new-builds, make sure opportunities to rent or buy are advertised within other Welsh language communities to reduce the dilution of language.

Academics

Research priority: Why might building new homes negatively affect the sense of community in some areas but not others?

As people like Eleri age, they stop driving and cannot rely on getting to a bus stop or there being an adequate rural bus service. Could academics explore the potential for driverless cars in rural areas?

Snippets from a 'warm spaces' drop-in: Attitudes to diversity

"Honestly, the thing I find hard is the opinions local communities have on certain kinds of people, you know, disabled, minorities. They are so outdated."

"I know. I asked for dropped kerbs, so it was safe to get from my house to the bus stop. They just said there was no money and did nothing. They aren't interested in disabled people."

"They aren't interested in any of us. My workplace took down the LGBTQ board so I put another one up myself.

"Each to their own. If people want to be gay that's fine, that's up to them, but don't shove it in my face on TV or kissing in the street."

"It's nice having the international students around. They add a bit of energy to the street."

"The university needs to do more to teach some of the foreign students about the culture. They've no respect for our ways and don't make any effort to fit in."

John, 43; Sian, 28; Alan, 40; and Fiona, 52.

People living in South west Wales

Many areas of South west Wales were described as having 'outdated' attitudes to gender, sexuality, disability, and cultural diversity. On the other hand, some participants had experienced acceptance and inclusion despite being 'different' to those living around them.

Policy-makers and funders

The financial and limitations of policy makers and funders to address the entire population's needs are a source of frustration for people who perceive that they are not a priority.

Doers

Organisers and service providers talked about making adjustments once someone asked to use a service or join in. However, participants talked about not using a service or joining an activity because they were not sure they would be welcome. *Those responsible for providing public services and community activities need to think about the diversity of the population and design for that.*

Academics

Participant suggestion: Support LGBTQ+ people to organise Pride events beyond Swansea city centre.

Use welcome week to introduce students to community members and activities by supporting community centres to host events. Provide cultural opportunities for local people and international students to do things together.

Tudur's story: What next after university?

"Jobs round here are either really well paid at the refinery or zero-hours minimum wage. It's the jobs for people like me that are missing, you know, for people who have just graduated. There are just no opportunities for jobs of value outside public services.

I thought of starting my own business instead, but there's no office spaces to rent and I didn't fit the right boxes for a grant. With the cost of fuel, I can't afford to travel for a low paid job and with the price of food gone up it makes it harder to spend extra money getting out into the countryside. I'm back home with mam for now, but I don't expect to stay around long. Breaks my heart and makes me angry that I can't build a life near mam."

Tudur, 20s, graduate in business management, currently unemployed and living at home.

People living in South west Wales

If Tudur had started his own business, he might have faced the barrier some of the participants reported: a feeling that local community members wanted to see them fail for 'getting above themselves'. As communities, we need to value enterprise and young people's ambitions.

Before looking to leave the area for university, it is worth checking what is available locally as this may give an opportunity to build links and gain experience that leads to a suitable job on graduation.

Policy-makers and funders

Listen to people who want to start businesses or who are struggling to start one or who have left the area because they found it impossible to get started in South west Wales. In particular, follow up those who are unsuccessful in grant applications and encourage people to contact you if they don't fit the right boxes. There will be future rounds of Levelling Up money and listening to people may help you shape a future project that allows more entrepreneurs to get started in their home area.

Doers

Communities are responding to cost-of-living challenges with warm spaces, foodbanks, and community meals. Sometimes people like Tudur don't realise these supports are available to people living in 'hidden poverty'.

There is scope for developing start-up communities and co-working spaces across the region.

Academics

Research priority: How can we ensure that young people can do well without leaving?

Mair's story: Libraries aren't just to borrow books

"The local library is excellent. The staff are so supportive and kind. I don't know what I'd do without them. They helped me sort out my benefits when I brought in a letter I didn't understand. I was in a right muddle, but they explained the letter, then got me set up on the computer and showed me what to do. They always make time to say 'hello'. We have coffee mornings on a Wednesday and it's always warm and friendly. It's more than just a place to borrow books. It's at the heart of our community. It's where people meet, especially since we lost the community centre. I was devastated when the council cut the hours and one of the staff lost her job because of that.

Mair, early 70s, mum of five adult children who have all moved away but still stay in touch, recently widowed.

People living in south west Wales

Love your libraries! They provide much more than just a book lending service. If you haven't visited your library recently, it is worth checking what they offer.

Versions of Mair's story are told by people of all ages and life-stages.

Policy-makers and funders

As Mair's story illustrates, libraries appear to be a highly effective preventative service. Reducing hours at the library or closing branches may lead to difficulties escalating and increase reliance on other public services.

Doers

Libraries often act as a hub for community activities. If you have an idea for a new activity, it is worth talking to the local branch to see if they can host it.

Academics

Research priority: Evidencing the social and community value of libraries. *This is because current performance measures in parts of South west Wales are based on number of books lent. New measures are needed to capture the value of the library to the community.*

Tom's story: community activism

"I'm proud of the volunteers and what we've achieved. We've turned the place around for ourselves. We don't need much funding to get projects up and running. I just wish the council listened to us and got behind us rather than make us fight for funding and then throwing money at projects they want.

We don't stand a chance given our councillor. They only care about the people with big houses who can afford to travel out of area for everything. We need a council and councillors who want to work with us, because improving our area shouldn't all be down to volunteers."

Tom, 37, co-founder and volunteer for a local environmental group.

People living in south west Wales

Tom's story is a common one, the passion and motivation for change brings communities together, often in spite of the difficulties that originally led to the activism. When people feel that decision making doesn't benefit them, this can lead to both positive activism and change, but also resentment. People want to feel that decision making is fair, transparent and to understand why some actions are prioritised over others.

Policy-makers and funders

Minimal funding is required to sustain multiple services, but communities have to fight for this funding. Distributing existing funding equally and prioritising the well-being of the community, with a long-term plan, would help.

Some participants believe that politicians priority is swaying votes to their side rather than considering the actual problems a community faces. They argued that equality and equity should be at the centre of policy-making but at the moment it feels, in many areas, that those with most money automatically have most power. It was felt by many that power doesn't sit within the local communities, but with the local authority, healthboards and Welsh and UK Government. They believe that the knowledge needed for good policy-making is local but local knowledge is often not valued by those with the power.

Doers

Keep doing! If you are funded to provide services and support communities, make sure you listen to people like Tom and take your lead from them. If you **are** a Tom, make sure you know how to evidence the impact of your work. If you aren't sure how, the National Lottery Community Fund guide is a good place to start https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/managing-your-grant/learn-from-your-project/data-and-evidence

Academics

Research priority: Self-help and mutual aid within communities, for example ideas for reciprocal care and mutual aid where all that is needed is a bit of help and advice so people can help each other.

Participant suggestion: Include co-production in education and training. Provide a co-production evaluation service. Help councillors and other elected members to learn to co-produce with their constituents.

Laura's story: Why we bought a holiday home

"We came on holiday, and it was so beautiful we decided we had to come back. There are pretty parks to walk my dog and meet people. I love the beach and the local coffee places and the hill views. I'm a big fan of the natural beauty this area has to offer. I am so grateful to have so much nature on my doorstep. We bought our second home here back in 2016 and come most weekends and for a few weeks each summer. It was an idyllic place to spend lockdown.

We have talked about moving here full-time now the children are older, but the poor Wi-Fi and phone signal make it hard to stay connected with the head office and I've heard there is a lack of opportunities and activities for teenagers."

Laura, 40s, English, senior manager in a financial company.

People living in south west Wales

Transient and part-time residents will continue to be a challenge for those who live full-time in south west Wales. There are similar issues with high densities of students living in previously family residential areas. There are impacts on housing costs, seasonal heavier use of public services (in some cases by non-council-tax payers such as students) and knock-on effects such as fewer resident children, so fewer pupils for local rural schools. Transient and part-time residents also affect local community, turning what was one community into a combination of 'the old community' and 'incomers'. *These are issues for policymakers. However, in the short term there may be ways to minimise the impact on the community by looking for ways to draw temporary residents into the community.*

Policy-makers and funders

This is a well-known policy issue that is already being addressed. It is worth noting that improving infrastructure and opportunities for teenagers might, in today's hybrid working culture, convert part-time residents to full-time residents.

Doers

Laura is not alone in wanting better infrastructure and more opportunities for teenagers. *Sometimes an outsider's view helps us recognise some of the key barriers to increased well-being and pride in our area. Prioritising these two issues could benefit everyone.*

Academics

Research priorities: The impact of second homes on community identity. The economic and social arguments for and against holiday homes.

The concept maps

PLACE is designed to give strong broad-brush insights across populations on complex issues where people think about and make sense of the issue in very different ways.

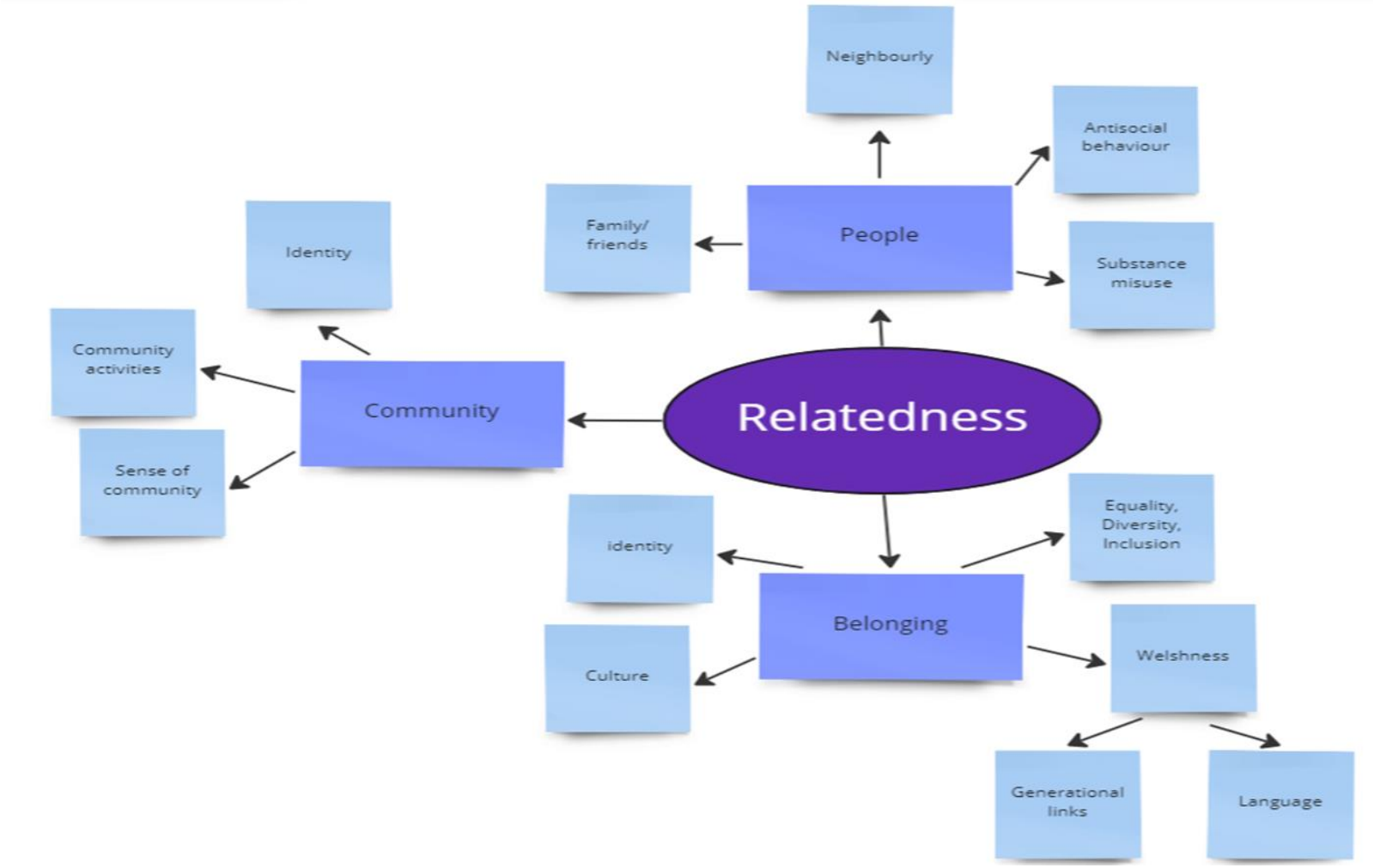
This means that the findings cannot offer reliable granular insights into pre-defined themes or for particular communities.

For this reason, we looked at how people themselves tended to group ideas and topics as they talked about their local area. We identified five clusters of concepts that we named as:

- relatedness
- the place itself
- services
- economy
- personal.

These are ordered in line with the strength of evidence and feelings from across the initial work and co-production event.

The method of PLACE means it would be misleading to analyse and present findings at the local level. Therefore, these maps are for South west Wales as a whole.


Neighbourly
Antisocial behaviour
Family/ friends
People
Substance misuse
Identity
Community activities
Community
Relatedness
Sense of community
identity
Equality, Diversity, Inclusion
Belonging
Culture
Welshness
Generational links
Language

Relatedness

Knowing and liking neighbours and having local family and friends were strongly correlated with satisfaction with an area.
This quote resonated with many people's comments: "I think about the people rather than the area first" when asked how they feel about where they live.

Across the region, some communities are in flux while some are more stable. Significant factors across the region were:

- influx of people not from the area, changing culture, stability, and language use in the area
- transient and seasonal populations reducing the possibility of building stable strong community
- changes in industry impacting the environment and economics
- local, Welsh and UK Government decisions about planning, investment, and regeneration.

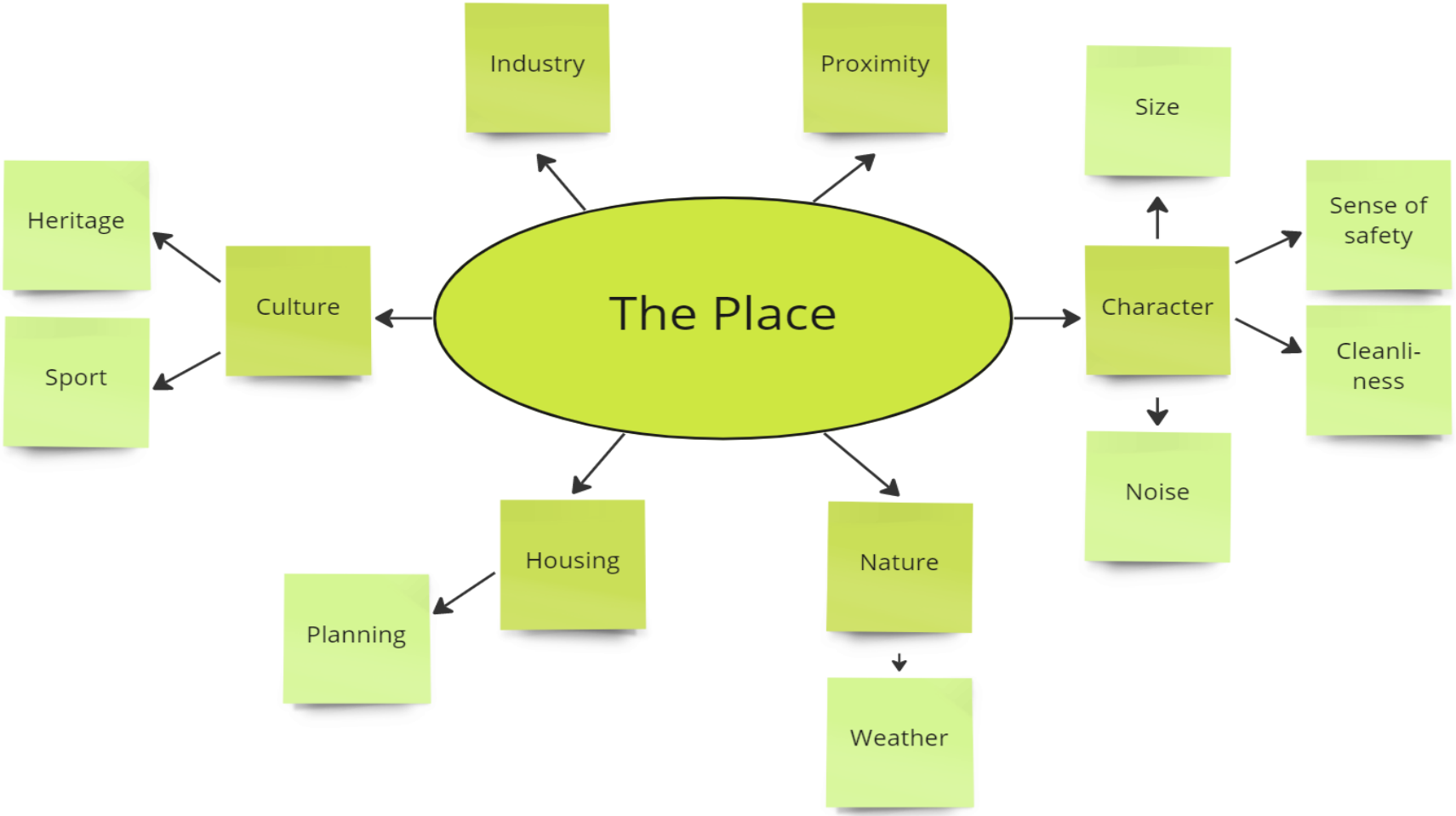
Everywhere had stories of littering, dog mess, noise pollution and examples of antisocial behaviour. There were pockets of vandalism, public drunkenness, and safety fears across the region.

There was nostalgia in areas across the region with a strong heritage and identity for a time when communities were more cohesive and more active, for example, organising annual local events.

There were frequent references to 'close-mindedness', 'old-fashionedness' and 'lack of acceptance' for diversity of gender, sexuality, culture, and skin colour, particularly but not exclusively in rural areas.

Across the region, there are different dynamics of Welsh-English culture, identity, and language use. In areas of high Welsh language use and among Welsh-language users in areas of low Welsh language use there was a sense that "there's Welsh Wales and there's English Wales", with people commenting on division in activities, social networks, informal support, neighbourliness. educational opportunities and job prospects along language lines.

There was equal pride in their Welsh identity among Welsh participants who spoke Welsh and those who only spoke English.


The Place
Industry
Proximity
Size
Heritage
Culture
Sport
Character
Sense of safety
Cleanli-ness
Noise
Housing
Planning
Nature
Weather

The place itself

The first things most people commented on when describing their area were the green and blue spaces. These were mentioned more often than any other feature. Green spaces included the countryside, parks and community projects, such as allotments. Blue spaces included beaches, the sea, rivers, and canals.
Pride was greatest where access was easiest, for example, living in easy walking distance or having access to a car. Easy access to beaches and the sea was recognised as a unique feature of Swansea as a city centre.

People felt more pride in places with an identity and character of its own, provided that character was in keeping with their expectations. “It is somewhere you can relax – tranquil, peaceful and unspoilt” was a matter of pride for one respondent but boredom and frustration for another.

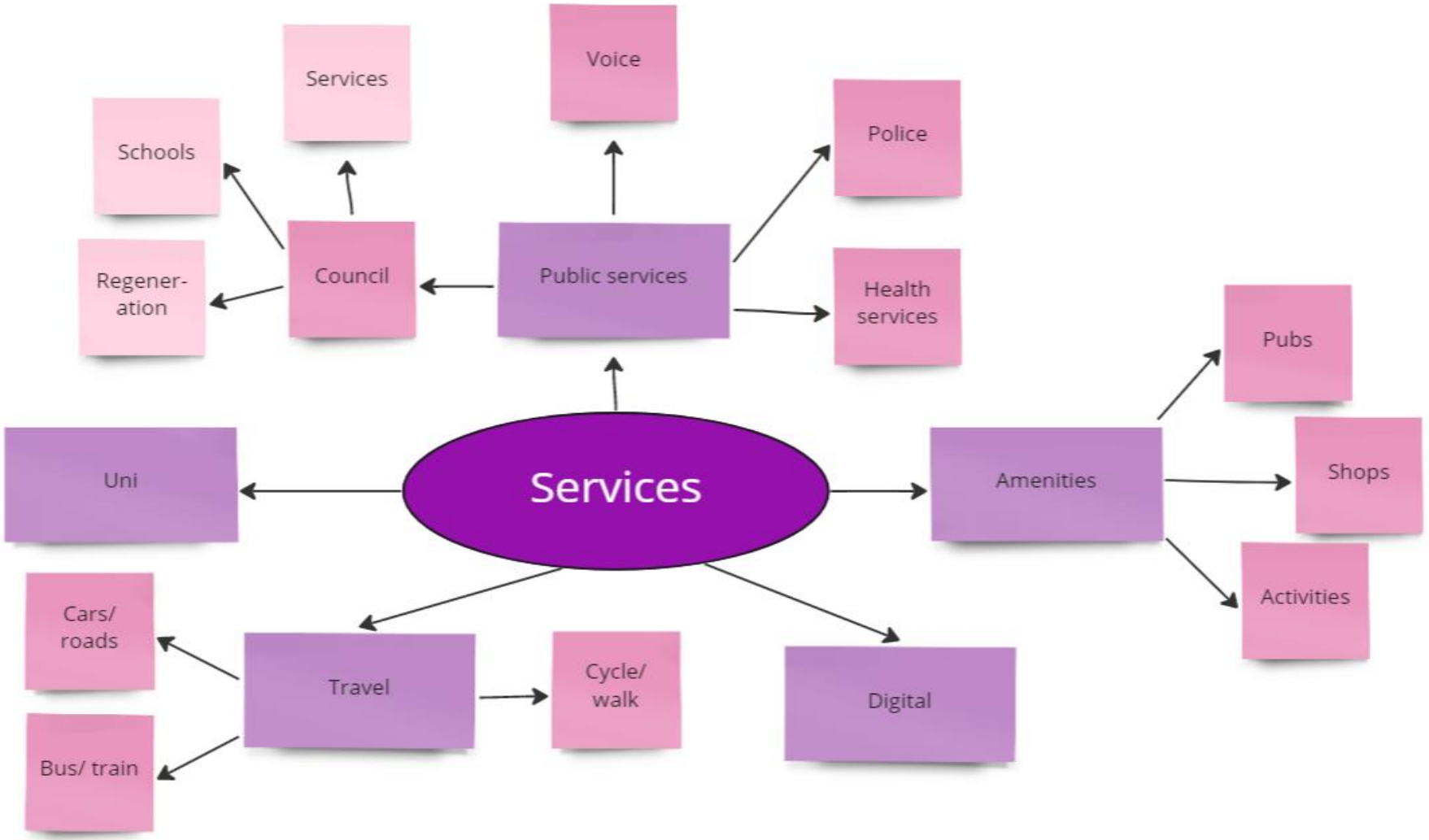
People were aware of how other people see their area, and this affects their pride. For example, “I’m not proud. I'm sad and embarrassed. When people ask me where I'm from and mention Ammanford, they say "oh, the drug place".

Across the region there were a few mentions of heritage, but it was not at the front of most people’s minds. Talk about heritage was mostly from Carmarthenshire, for example, “I think of rugby and tinworks. It’s a town with a rich history in those areas. As the tin industry has left Llanelli, it’s a shame to see the decline in support for rugby with football on the rise”.

Housing is an issue across the region. Many people struggled with affordability of rent and home ownership. However, those returning to the area, for example, from Bristol or London, often either had capital from a house sale or returned as remote workers still earning Bristol/London wages. They found they could now afford better housing as prices in the region were lower. The pandemic was reported as increasing the numbers moving to the region for remote working, to take advantage of a better lifestyle, more affordable housing, and beauty of the natural environment. This suggests the issue is not the price of the housing as much as the wages, jobs and business opportunities in the region.

The sense of being a community suffered when too many people living part-time in an area, whether tourists, second home owners or students. There were similarities in comments from local families in high-density student areas of Swansea and local families in rural areas with a high-density of holiday lets. Issues related to no longer knowing neighbours and lack of mixing between deeply embedded and incomer or transient residents.

Across the region, concerns about safety were raised by particular groups of people who are known to be targets of hate crime, for example, people with learning disabilities, LGBTQ+ people and minority ethnic people. Visibility of support increased a sense of safety, whether rainbow flags being displayed or shops signing up with the Assist My Life app to be ‘safe spaces’ for people with learning disabilities.


Services
Uni
Public services
Council
Schools
Services
Voice
Police
Regener-
ation
Health
services
Amenities
Pubs
Shops
Activities
Travel
Cars/
roads
Bus/ train
Cycle/
walk
Digital

Services

Across the region there was a general desire for activities and amenities for secondary school age young people and young adults. Lack of these was linked to young adults choosing to leave and youths engaging in boredom-related antisocial behaviour.

Independently run, quirky shops, cafes and pubs were valued, along with access to high-quality High Street stores. People in rural areas commented on the closure of banks, independent pubs, and lack of fresh food in some village shops.

There were general issues with the reliability, regularity, cleanliness, and cost of the bus service. Issues with parking, speeding and potholes were reported across the region as affecting how people felt about where they live.

Safe green travel routes and the coastal path were viewed positively.

Local schools were seen as essential for strong communities at both primary and secondary level, with clubs and activities for youths concentrated on areas with a secondary school.

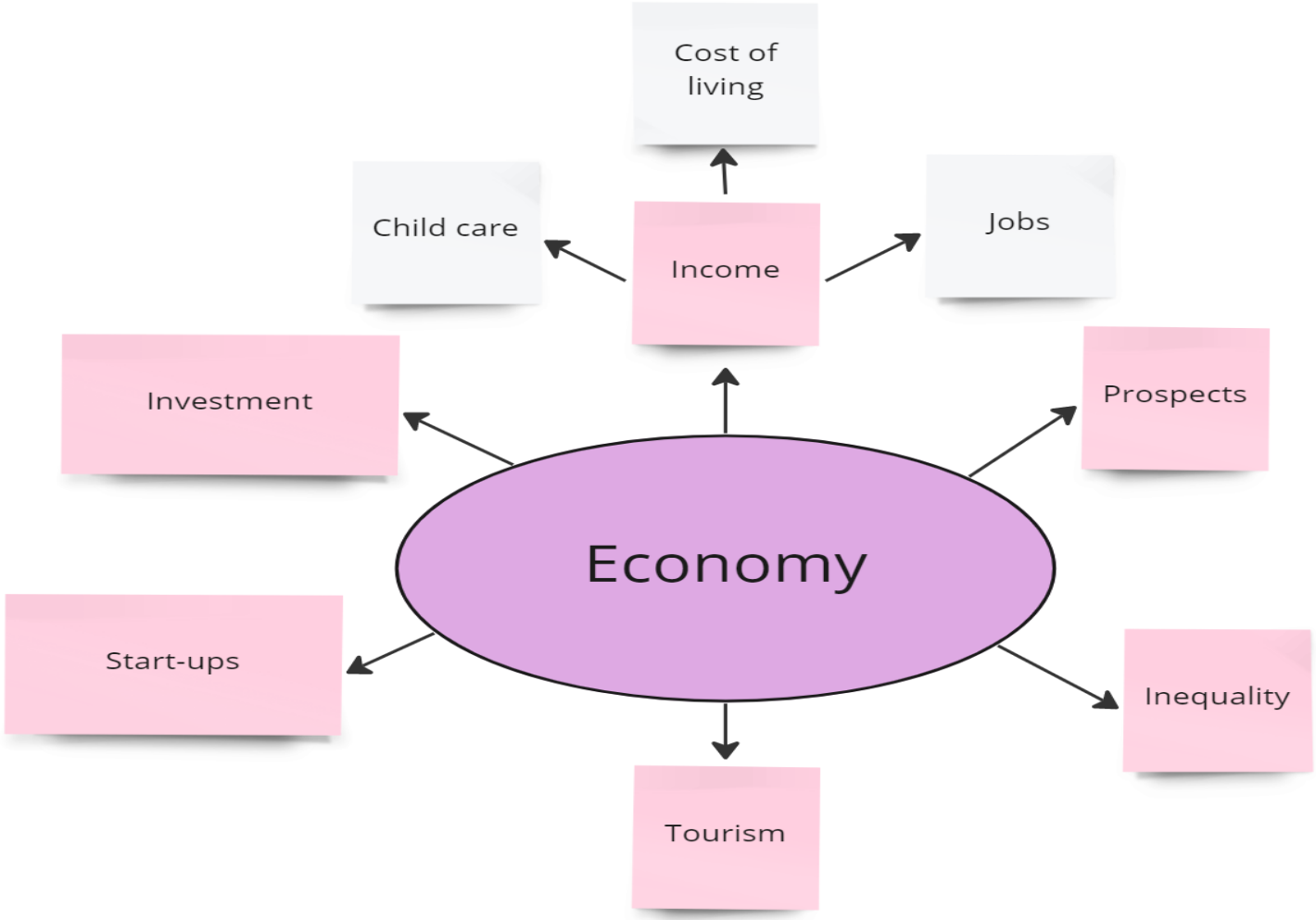
Some people felt that universities could do more to help raise aspirations by working with local schools and making sure young people know their options for studying without leaving the region.

There were mixed comments about county and community councillors and councils. Some felt that councillors need to take more pride in their area and encourage local community initiatives. Others praised local initiatives and their councillor's community involvement.

In general, there was a desire for councils to "up their game" and for "fresh people involved in local politics to bring fresh insights".

The visibility of policing mattered, as did feeling sure that police would treat people fairly, with examples being given of LGBTQ+ and Romani or traveller people having felt treated unfairly.

Regeneration in Swansea was generally praised, with urgent regeneration of town centres and high streets a top priority across the region.


Cost of living
Child care
Income
Jobs
Investment
Prospects
Economy
Start-ups
Inequality
Tourism

The Economy

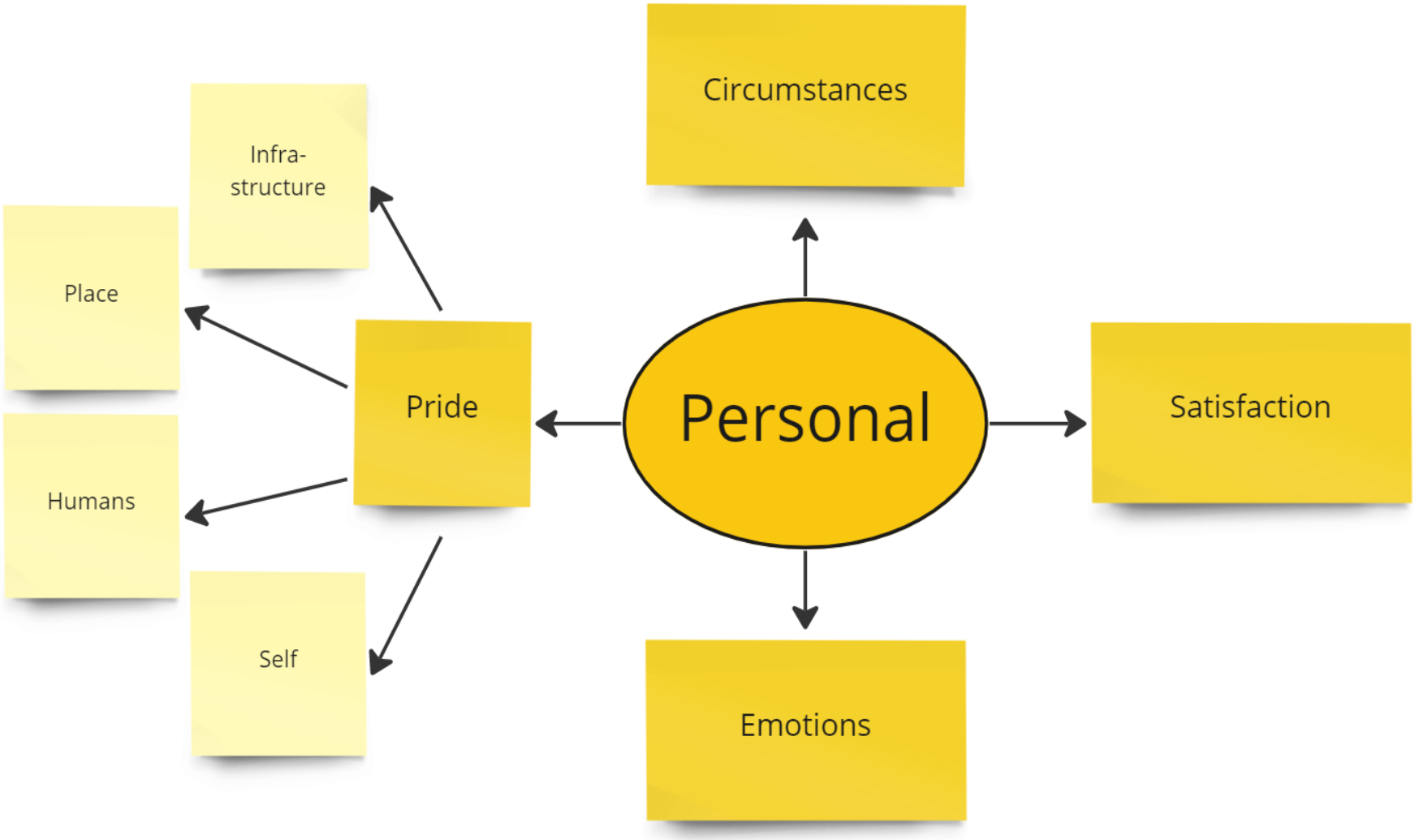
In urban areas, people commented on visible poverty, such as street-sleeping, begging and the use of foodbanks. In more rural areas, people were more likely to talk about hidden inequality, particularly for those unable to afford to run a car.

There was a desire for investment in local businesses, business start-ups and the infrastructure needed for high-quality remote work. While the pandemic saw people already in well paid jobs moving to the area for remote working, fewer local people have seen the potential for staying local while working remotely for companies based outside Wales.

Culturally, there still seems to be a tendency to be suspicious or dismissive of people with high business aspirations. Some felt it was more acceptable to be quietly self-employed than have the vision to start a major business.

In some areas, jobs are either highly paid or poorly paid, with few options outside of public service in the middle ground. This risks polarising communities and making it harder for those who have only experienced poorly paid or low-paying employment to aspire to a higher income.

Tourism is a feature of the region. It was felt that more could be done to exploit this, but it needed to be in keeping with the place “so it doesn’t lose its character and the reason tourists come”.


Circumstances
Infra-
structure
Place
Pride
Personal
Satisfaction
Humans
Self
Emotions

Personal

Pride is intrinsically personal, with people with apparently similar demographics talking very differently about their feelings about where they live.

Satisfaction is a term used in relation to Pride in Place in the Levelling Up agenda, but the people we spoke with saw it as a distinct concept from pride. People might feel more or less satisfied independent of pride. Pride was more related to a desire to defend or boast about their area in conversation with 'outsiders'.

Satisfaction had an economic element. However, pride was reported primarily in terms of the concepts associated with the maps for 'personal' and 'place'. Pride in oneself and the infrastructure (e.g., council for providing amenities and activities) were also reported. Pride was not reported in relation to the concepts associated with the map for 'economy'.

Levelling Up and the Well-being of Future Generations Act

Both the Levelling Up agenda and the Well-being of Future Generations Act seek to improve quality of life at the population level, prioritising areas and people who currently have lower qualities of life. The well-being goals provide a Welsh interpretation of areas of focus in order to achieve Pride in Place and Levelling Up across Wales and across the UK.

Our data indicate that all seven well-being goals are relevant to how people in South west Wales feel about their area, their lives, and their futures.

Each local authority area has a well-being plan. There were no 'red flags' from this work suggesting that the well-being plans were significantly 'off target'.

However, our findings indicate each local authority's well-being plan would benefit from giving a higher profile and more consideration to the impacts of tourism. These comments indicate the range of ways in which tourism needs consideration within well-being plans:

"When people come here it is hard because we end up with a lot of tourism. People visit here because they like that it is quiet and not too commercialised. I would develop the place but keep a balance with the place, so it doesn't lose its character."

"Tourism is what keeps Pembroke going – the cafes and shops. It's a ghost town in the winter. We need to focus on creating jobs outside of tourism."

"The over-tourism is having a negative impact on the community."

"People feel pushed out; the area becomes over-run."

"The environment only gets appreciated by tourists who come across the world to see it. We forget the beauty on our doorsteps. We take it for granted."

A role for universities?

Most of those who took part had little idea of what universities do and, therefore, little understanding of how universities could use their resources and research to improve life across the region. The team needed to explain the university role in learning, research, and employment before people could offer their often-tentative thoughts about how universities could benefit the region.

Participants asked academics and their universities to consider these practical actions:

- Design short university courses and the opportunity to stay in halls for people with learning disabilities to learn leadership and practical subjects.
- Visit classrooms and youth clubs and offer summer residential tasters of university life for young people from across the region as part of raising aspirations and making them aware of the diversity of career options available.
- Support LGBTQ+ people outside of Swansea to organise Pride events.
- Return to being places of academic learning rather than acting like businesses.
- Lectures to community groups and free short courses at community centres, including short courses to compensate for 'missing education' on IT and running a business.
- Offer apprenticeships and make young people from across the region aware of degree apprenticeships.
- Make people across the region more aware of what the universities do and how universities can benefit local communities.
- Give people the knowledge to have the power. For example, provide expert academic knowledge and support for local issues, such as listed buildings, the canal issue (Jersey Marine), and housing law, especially what to do if property owners are suspected of breaching it.
- Collaboration with other agencies/building partnerships.
- Sharing best practice.
- Helping councillors be co-producers' in their communities.
- Evidence based examples – encourage more community involvement.

What happens next?

People living in south west Wales

The strength and commitment to local community is clear. We want to encourage everyone to continue to work for strong community. Public services have a duty to engage and consult on things that affect your lives, but sometimes lack the skills to know how to reach out effectively to all parts of the community. Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services and Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services can help you have an effective voice in local issues. Contact the authors if you would like to be invited to take part in future work.

Policy-makers and funders

Value local knowledge and develop ways of listening to and working with a diversity of local people. This needs to happen in ways that allow people to talk on their own terms and share their own sense-making of their lives, communities and the wider region. The methodology report and Co-production Network for Wales offer excellent starting points for this journey. Contact the authors to be connected with participants who made specific suggestions.

Doers

Be aware of the need to develop your networks to make sure public, private, Third Sector and informal community organisations can develop common goals and ways of working together. Look for ways to serve, encourage and strengthen informal community activism and local associations and organisations. Contact the authors to be connected with participants who made specific suggestions.

Academics

We hope academics and their universities can use this report to shape and prioritise future research applications and to recognise the vast wealth of knowledge available to them from the people of South west Wales.

We recognise that some already have knowledge and expertise that could address issues raised by people living in South west Wales. We, therefore, encourage academics to secure knowledge mobilisation grants to put their existing knowledge and expertise at the disposal of people like those who participated in this Community Listening activity. Contact the authors to be connected with participants who made specific suggestions.

Better consultation, engagement and co-production

TiG, The Intersectional Grid, solves one of the challenges of consultation, engagement and co-production. How do we make sure we have the right diversity of people with the right breadth of life and professional experience in the room? For information about how TiG works and to discuss whether TiG is right for your context, contact *Barod CIC* either via their website (www.barod.org) or by emailing bryan@barod.org

The concept of complex adaptive systems will be unfamiliar to many. For an introduction designed for public services, either visit the *Human. Learning. Systems.* website (www.humanlearning.systems) or, for a focus on co-production and complexity, visit https://info.copronet.wales/co-production-involvement-people-centred-practice

Local Challenges Research Office at Swansea University

This modest project confirmed for us that where we live and work heavily influences our lives. In south west Wales, our unique landscape, history and culture provide hope and opportunity for some people but act as barriers for others. History shows us that deprivation and social inequality persists in certain places, affecting generations of families and entire communities. However, it is more subtle than that: the characteristics of a single neighbourhood can be seen as positive by one person and not by another. To try and address this, policy in Wales and the UK has recently shifted to recognise that different places often need different support. It's when communities come together to solve local challenges that we can make real change – both for ourselves and for others experiencing shared challenges across the globe.

We are launching a new Local Challenges Research Office (LCRO) to help promote understanding of the challenges and opportunities that communities are experiencing across the region. In this first stage, our desire is to listen to your thoughts about our region, and how the office should function. We want to build a foundation to work together and, towards, the coproduction of cohesive communities in south west Wales.'
To understand more, please visit:

https://www.swansea.ac.uk/humanities-and-socialsciences/lcro/ (English)

https://www.swansea.ac.uk/cy/dyniaethau-a-gwyddoraucymdeithasol/syhl/ (Cymraeg)

APPENDIX: RAPID EVIDENCE REVIEW

The Rapid Evidence Review was used to develop the concepts and drive the selection of areas and people needed to take part in the Community Listening in order for the findings to give an overview for the region as a whole.

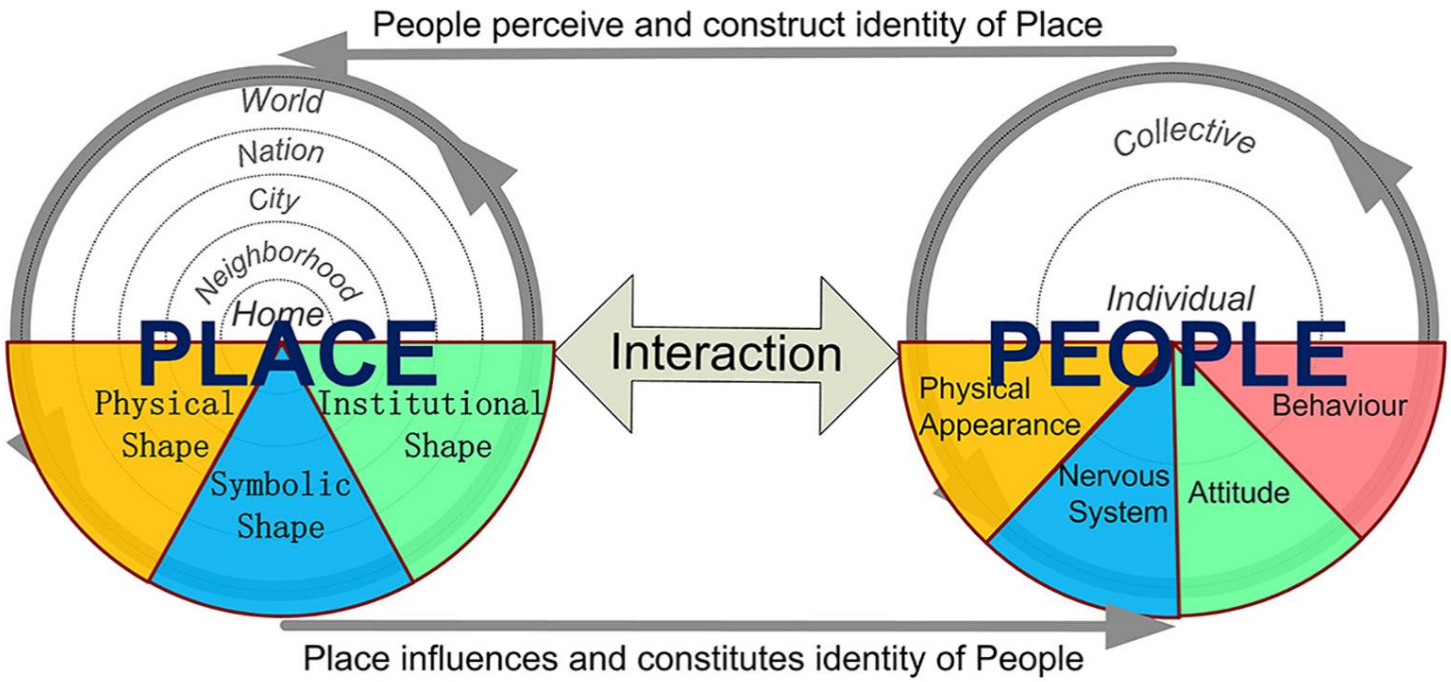
The evidence review has one aim: to inform the selection of categories and characteristics for the TiG. Therefore, we will present some key concepts and categories as we have found them in the literature.

An important and timely review of Pride in Place has been recently published: Townscapes: Pride in Place (Shaw et al., 2022),
Selected relevant findings of this review are:

- People who inhabit a place are the key agents in shaping its character, boundaries and defining features.
- Individuals and groups construct places through different stories. This means that there may be several stories for one place, especially if communities are divided along cultural, language or wealth lines.
- Pride is one emotion linked to place, but there is also feelings of connection or disconnection, belonging or alienation and attachment or detachment.
- The built environment is an important part of the place that people relate to.
- Feelings of collective and individual agency are associated with being rooted in a place.
- Feelings about the past are used as yardsticks to measure a perceived decline.
- Heritage assets play a role in providing stories about a place's identity.
- Local places are the primary site where a sense of shared value and social purpose for individuals and groups is expressed.
- Places are important to culture and tradition.
- Pride in Place is high in communities that have been established for a long time.
- Pride is associated with positive outcomes such as physical and mental well-being, confidence, self-esteem, resilience and social interaction.
- Pride and productive engagement within communities are mutually beneficial. So volunteering, involvement in key local decisions, community ownership and community-led businesses increase the sense of the prospects of a place encouraging participation and resulting in more pride in that place.
- Conversely, where people are not able to engage in their community, then pride is reduced and engagement becomes less likely.

These statements suggest that Pride in Place is not just something that is based on the characteristics of a person. There are many interactions between the people who make up a community and that place that will affect whether pride is growing or in decline.
Therefore, as we select people to talk about Pride in Place, we should also be aware of the places that they inhabit.

Peng et al (2020) has tried to illustrate this in the following diagram:



There are many connections between pride in a place and the social and physical attributes of a place. Therefore, for a given place the things that can change or enhance a feeling of pride will be different to other places. This suggests that whilst we may categorise places according to a number of attributes, that just because something works in one place, does not mean it will work in another, even if it shares some characteristics, e.g., ex mining village or seaside town.

Taking one aspect of place: heritage, there has been some work done by Antink et al (2020) on using heritage assets to improve the lives of people in an area using the idea of inclusive growth.

The following diagram shows what is meant by inclusive growth and the part that esteem (= pride?) plays in this. It also links the traditional individual based growth targets (income/skills/employment) with wider ideas of community wealth and community participation. These are related to pride in the Bennett Institute review.

Image after Antik et al, 2019

Reviewing the local literature, including well-being plans, knowledge reviews and evaluations of area-based interventions, there are many projects that will have contributed to improving the Pride in Place of the people in an area. However, pride is extremely difficult to measure (see the Bennett Institute review). As we hold conversations with people from different communities, we may be in a position to see what markers appear for pride. This may give us some ways of telling if any planned interventions have succeeded.

Key factors identified in the reports as impacting Pride in Place

- infrastructure
- housing
- transport
- crime rate
- education establishments
- job market
- streetscape
- sport
- access to green spaces
- interdependencies
- heritage and history
- language
- accessibility (cultural, physical and social)
- local media
- public trust

Where to find out more

Antink, B, Cox, E, Cooke, J, Stenning, S, and Locke, N. (2020). *Heritage for Inclusive Growth*. The RSA. Available at: https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/reports/2020/the-rsa-heritage-for-inclusive-growth.pdf

Collis A (2021). Not Just the Usual Suspects: Designing a new method for public consultation. PhD Thesis, University of Bangor. Available at: https://research.bangor.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/not-just-the-usual-suspects(eae97035-4f93-4c5f-8e82-fe79eddfc817).html

Peng, I, Stiiker, D, and Wu, Q. (2020). Place Identity: how far have we come in exploring its meanings? *Front. Psycol.* 11:294. doi https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00294

Shaw, J, Garling, O, and Kenny, M. (2022). *Townscapes. Pride in Place.* The Bennett Institute
Available at: https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Pride-in-Place-Report.pdf