



APPENDIX 1

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021 – 2022

COUNCIL

29TH SEPTEMBER 2021

**2023 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN WALES –
BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES' INITIAL PROPOSALS**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the publication of the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission for Wales which were published on the 8th September 2021 in respect of the proposed new parliamentary constituencies in Wales.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended Members:

- 2.1 Note the publication of the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission for Wales in respect of the 2023 review of Parliamentary Constituencies which are attached at Appendix 1a to the report; and
- 2.2 Refer consideration of the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agree the feedback therefrom be presented to Council at its meeting to be held on the 20th October 2021, in order that a response can be made by the deadline of the 3rd November 2021.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In March 2020, the UK Government announced it would not implement the recommendations of the 2018 review. Instead, it announced, it would introduce a Bill to amend the rules by which boundary reviews are carried out. The Parliamentary Constituencies Bill 2019–21 was introduced on 19 May 2020. The Bill passed its final Parliamentary stages on 26 November 2020 and received Royal Assent on 14 December 2020 and became known as the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020. It abandoned the 2018 review, and therefore cancelled plans to reduce the size of the House of Commons to 600 seats. The size of the House of Commons remains fixed at 650 seats.



However, the calculation of the allocation of seats between the countries of the UK remains based on the proportion of the UK registered electorate in each country. This calculation results in a reduction in the number of Parliamentary constituencies in Wales – from the present 40 constituencies to 32.

- 3.2 Attached at Appendix 1a is a copy of the initial proposals report of the Boundary Commission for Wales, which was published on the 8th September 2021 and any comments in relation thereto are to be made by the 3rd November 2021. Also attached at Appendices 1b-1e are the proposed new constituency boundary maps for Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare, Pontypridd, Rhondda, Cardiff North and Cardiff West.
- 3.3 The Act says that the Commission may take into account “local government boundaries” as it develops its proposals for parliamentary constituencies. The Act defines local government boundaries in Wales as the boundaries of counties, county boroughs, electoral wards, communities and community wards that existed or were “prospective” on the “review date”. For the 2023 Review, this means the local government boundaries referred to are those that were in force on 1 December 2020 (since there were no prospective boundaries in Wales on that date).
- 3.4 Schedule 2 to the Act sets out a number of Rules (attached at Appendix 2 ('Guide to the Review')) that are relevant to the development of proposals for individual constituencies. Foremost among these is Rule 2, which provides that - apart from 5 specified exceptions in the UK - every constituency must have an electorate that is no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the 'UK electoral quota'. The UK electoral quota for the 2023 Review is, to the nearest whole number, 73,393.
- 3.5 The only Welsh constituency that is not subject to the operation of the UK electoral quota is Ynys Môn.
- 3.6 Therefore, apart from the Ynys Môn, every constituency in Wales must have an electorate as at the review date that is no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062. These parameters are referred to as the 'statutory electorate range'.
- 3.7 There are a number of other factors that the Commission may take into account as it develops proposals and recommendations for parliamentary constituencies, specifically:
 - special geographical considerations, including, in particular, the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency
 - Local government boundaries that existed or were prospective on 1 December 2020 (see 3.3 above)



- boundaries of existing constituencies
- any 'local ties' that would be broken by changes in constituencies
- the inconveniences attendant on such changes.

3.8 Although Welsh constituencies (other than the Isle of Anglesey) must comply with the statutory electorate range, the Act does not require the Commission to seek to create constituencies with electorates that are as close as possible to the UK electoral quota. Nor does the Commission consider it appropriate to pursue a policy objective of minimising divergence from the UK electoral quota. Such an objective would undermine the ability of the Commission to take properly into account the factors listed in para 3.7 above.

Therefore, for example, the Commission would prefer to recommend a constituency that had, say, a 4% variance from the UK electoral quota, but that respected existing electoral wards, in preference to an alternative that produced a constituency with only a 1% variance, but that would split existing electoral wards.

3.9 As far as possible, the Commission will seek to recommend constituencies:

- made up of whole electoral wards that are adjacent to each other
- that do not contain 'detached parts', i.e. where the only physical connection between one part of the constituency and the remainder would require passage through a different constituency.

3.10 The Commission is required to work on the basis of the numbers of electors on the electoral register as at 2nd March 2020. It is unable to take account of any alleged under-registration or over-registration of electors that may be claimed to have existed in particular areas as at that date.

Naming and Designating Constituencies

3.11 In making its proposals, the Commission is also required by the Act to specify a name and designation for each proposed constituency. The Act contains little guidance on these points.

3.12 The Commission's policy on the naming of constituencies is that, if constituencies remain largely unchanged, the existing constituency name should usually be retained. In such cases constituency names are likely to be altered only where there is good reason for change.

3.13 For a new constituency, the name should normally reflect that of the principal council or principal councils wholly or mainly contained in the constituency. However, if there is an objection and a suitable alternative name which generally commands greater local support, the Commission will usually recommend that alternative.



- 3.14 The Commission adopts compass point names when there is not a more suitable name. The compass point reference used will generally form a prefix in cases where a constituency name refers to the principal council area or former district council but a suffix where the rest of the name refers to a population centre. Examples of existing constituencies that demonstrate this principle are 'Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire' and 'Swansea West'.
- 3.15 The Commission considers that it is appropriate for each constituency in Wales to have an alternate name in Welsh or English. The Commission has therefore provided for official alternatives in Welsh for those constituencies names in English, and vice versa. Where a constituency name is acceptable in both Welsh and English there will be no alternative.
- 3.16 The Act also requires that each constituency is designated as either a 'county constituency' or a 'borough constituency'. The Commission considers that, as a general principle, where constituencies contain more than a small rural element they should normally be designated as county constituencies. In other cases they should be designated as borough constituencies. The designation is suffixed to the constituency name and is usually abbreviated: BC for borough constituency and CC for county constituency.
- 3.17 The designation generally determines who shall act as Returning Officer for Parliamentary elections. The designation also determines the limit on the amount that a candidate is allowed to spend during a Parliamentary election in the constituency. The limit is slightly lower in borough constituencies, to reflect the lower costs of running a campaign in an urban, usually more compact, area.

4. PROPOSALS FOR CONSTITUENCIES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

4.1 PONTYPRIDD

The Commission proposes that a county constituency be created from:

1. The following electoral wards within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf (which currently form part of the existing Pontypridd CC): Beddau (3,172), Church Village (4,424), Graig (1,885), Hawthorn (3,180), Llantrisant Town (3,187), Llantwit Fardre (4,825), Pontypridd Town (2,208), Rhondda (3,458), Rhydfelen Central/Ilan (3,037), Talbot Green (1,965), Ton-teg (3,183), Trallwng (2,824), Treforest (2,862) and Tyn-y-nant (2,454) and:

2. The following electoral wards within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf (which currently form part of the existing Cynon Valley CC): Aberaman North (3,609), Aberaman South (3,541), Abercynon (4,441),



Cilfynydd (2,110), Glyncoch (2,006), Mountain Ash East (2,254), Mountain Ash West (3,123), Penrhiwceiber (4,056) and Ynysybwl (3,433).

- 4.2 This constituency would have 71,237 electors, which is 2.9% below the UKEQ of 73,393 electors per constituency.
- 4.3 The proposed single name for the constituency is Pontypridd.
- 4.4 The existing Pontypridd constituency is currently below the statutory requirements in respect of the size of the electorate. The Commission considered several options, and proposes to combine electoral wards from the neighbouring Cynon Valley constituency to meet the statutory electorate range. The Commission considers that including electoral wards from Cynon Valley that are wholly within the Rhondda Cynon Taf principal council area creates a constituency that is retained within a single principal council area and that combining the electoral wards of Cilfynydd and Glyncoch with the rest of the town of Pontypridd as proposed would ensure the whole of the town of Pontypridd is included within one constituency, where it is currently split across two existing constituencies.
- 4.5 The Commission considers that combining electoral wards from the existing Pontypridd constituency and the existing Cynon Valley constituency in this way provides for an appropriate constituency that follows the valley roads from north to south.
- 4.6 The proposed constituency includes electoral wards that are wholly within the Rhondda Cynon Taf principal council area.
- 4.7 The Commission proposes that the existing constituency name of Pontypridd be the single name for this constituency, which the Commission considers to be recognisable and acceptable in both Welsh and English.
- 4.8 **Note:**
- It is proposed the electoral ward of Taffs Well (2,855) within the existing constituency of Pontypridd be transferred to Cardiff North.
- It is proposed the electoral ward of Pont-y-clun (6,061) within the existing constituency of Pontypridd be transferred to Cardiff West.
- It is proposed the electoral wards of Tonyrefail East (4,433) and Tonyrefail West (4,896) and 199 electors in the Llanharry Electoral Ward within the existing constituency of Pontypridd be transferred to Rhondda.
- 4.9 **RHONDDA**



- 4.10 The Commission proposes that a county constituency be created from:
1. The following electoral wards within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf (which currently make up the existing Rhondda CC): Cwm Clydach (1,987), Cymmer (3,977), Ferndale (3,114), Llwyn-y-pia (1,637), Maerdy (2,283), Pen-y-graig (3,929), Pentre (3,902), Porth (4,282), Tonypany (2,686), Trealaw (2,895), Treherbert (4,158), Treorchy (5,693), Tylorstown (3,054), Ynyshir (2,380) and Ystrad (4,285) and:
 2. The following electoral wards within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf (which currently form part of the existing Ogmore CC): Brynna (3,616), Gilfach Goch (2,437), Llanharan (2,819) and Llanharry (3,022) and:
 3. The following electoral wards within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf (which currently form part of the existing Pontypridd CC): Llanharry (199), Tonyrefail East (4,433) and Tonyrefail West (4,896).
- 4.11 This constituency would have 71,684 electors, which is 2.3% below the UKEQ of 73,393 electors per constituency.
- 4.12 The proposed official single name for the constituency is Rhondda.
- 4.13 The existing Rhondda constituency is currently below the statutory requirements in respect of the size of the electorate. The Commission considered several options, and proposes to combine the existing Rhondda constituency with electoral wards from the neighbouring existing Ogmore and Pontypridd constituencies to meet the statutory electorate range.
- 4.14 The Commission is proposing to include electoral wards from the neighbouring constituencies that are wholly within the Rhondda Cynon Taf principal council area. There are good road links throughout the proposed constituency, which follows the valley roads from north to south, to retain the integrity and identity of the valley.
- 4.15 The proposed constituency includes electoral wards that are wholly within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf principal council area and includes the whole of the existing Rhondda constituency.
- 4.16 The Commission proposes that the existing constituency name of Rhondda remains the single name for this constituency, which the Commission considers to be recognisable and acceptable in both Welsh and English.
- 4.17 **MERTHYR TYDFIL AND ABERDARE**
- 4.18 The Commission proposes that a county constituency be created from: 1. The entire County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil principal council area, comprising the



following electoral wards (which currently form part of the existing Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney CC): Bedlinog (2,977), Cyfarthfa (5,457), Dowlais (5,014), Gurnos (3,477), Merthyr Vale (2,798), Park (3,296), Penydarren (3,818), Plymouth (4,096), Town (5,998), Treharris (5,270) and Vaynor (2,880) and:

2. The following electoral wards within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf (which currently form part of the Cynon Valley CC): Aberdare East (4,909), Aberdare West/Llwydcoed (7,404), Cwmbach (3,751), Hirwaun (3,167), Pen-y-waun (1,973) and Rhigos (1,370) and:

3. The electoral ward of Nelson (3,563) within the County Borough of Caerphilly (which currently forms part of the existing Caerphilly CC).

4.19 This constituency would have 71,218 electors, which is 3% below the UKEQ of 73,393 electors per constituency.

4.20 The proposed name for the constituency is Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare. The proposed official alternative name for the constituency is Merthyr Tudful ac Aberdâr.

4.21 The existing Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney and Cynon Valley constituencies are currently below the statutory requirements in respect of the size of the electorate. The Commission considered several options, and proposes to combine the whole of the Merthyr Tydfil principal council area with the electoral wards of Aberdare East, Aberdare West/ Llwydcoed, Cwmbach, Hirwaun, Pen-y-waun and Rhigos from the existing Cynon Valley.

4.22 The Commission acknowledges that a constituency formed of these areas does not follow the geography of the valleys from north to south. However, there are good road links across the Heads of the Valleys, which maintain an accessible link throughout the area. To meet the statutory electorate range, the Commission also proposes to incorporate the Nelson electoral ward from the existing Caerphilly constituency into this proposed constituency. This electoral ward is connected to the remainder of the proposed constituency by road, and is similar in character to the rest of the constituency.

4.23 The proposed constituency includes the whole of the Merthyr Tydfil principal council area, and is combined with electoral wards from the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf and the County Borough of Caerphilly principal council areas. The Commission proposes that the names of Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare are used in the constituency name to reflect the primary settlements within the proposed constituency.

5. CONSULTATION



5.1 Timetable for the review

The initial outline timetable for the review is planned as follows:

- 5 January 2021: Publication of electorate figures by ONS, BCW begin development of initial proposals;
- 16 March 2021: Publish 'Guide to the 2023 Review';
- 8 September 2021: Publish initial proposals and conduct eight-week consultation (ends 3rd November 21);
- December 2021: Publish responses to initial proposals
- January 2022: conduct six-week 'secondary consultation', including between two and five public hearings in each region;
- Late 2022: Publish revised proposals and conduct four-week written consultation;
- June 2023: Submit and publish final report and recommendations

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from the report.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 As can be seen from the proposals contained in Appendix 1a, there are many matters for consideration with the proposed new constituencies and boundaries, the naming and designations etc. It is therefore suggested that the matter be initially considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the feedback therefrom be presented to the Council Meeting in October in order that a response can be made by the deadline of the 3rd November 2021.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

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Freestanding Matter