



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ARRANGEMENTS OF RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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Introduction

The legislation that covers community reviews is the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (the Act). Under the Act the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) has a general duty to monitor arrangements for local government across Wales. Each principal council however has a duty to monitor the communities in its area and, where appropriate, the electoral arrangements of such communities for the purposes of considering whether to make or recommend changes. These changes are brought about by means of community boundaries reviews and community electoral reviews.

The Principal Council (the Council) is conducting a review of its community arrangements. This review is being carried out under section 25 of the Act, which covers the changes to boundaries and any consequential changes to electoral arrangements.

The first stage of the review is to ask all interested parties to consider the current community boundaries and submit their views on any changes required to create communities that provide for effective and convenient local government. All submissions will then be considered, and the Council will publish a Draft Proposals Report and will hold a consultation on those proposals. All submissions will then be considered, and Final Proposals will be submitted to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales. The Commission will then if it thinks fit, to give effect to these recommendations either as submitted, or with modifications.

The review will start in May 2024 with final recommendations being provisionally scheduled to be submitted for adoption in March 2025.

Why are we undertaking this review?

The Council has a duty to review the community arrangements across the principal council area and to report to the Commission on their community arrangements every ten years. This is with the aim of ensuring that communities continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government.

What is the aim of the review?

The Council aims to ensure that community boundaries reflect the identities and interests of the communities across the principal council area and that they are both effective and convenient.

As part of the review, the Council will have regard to:

- the creation, abolition or merging of communities and community wards
- the name of the community and, where warded, the name of community wards
- Where changes have been made to the boundaries of communities or community wards the number of councillors representing the community and, where warded, the number of councillors per ward.
- The wards that are contested and uncontested in recent community council elections

What can be considered under this review?

This review will look at the community boundaries across the principal council area. Any changes to electoral arrangements for communities will only be considered as a consequence of any changes to community boundaries.

Who will undertake this review?

The Council is responsible for undertaking the review under section 25 of the Act. On completion of the review, the Council will submit recommendations to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales. The Commission will then if it thinks fit, to give effect to these recommendations either as submitted, or with modifications.

Public Consultation and Submissions

When undertaking the review, the Council is required to undertake such steps as it thinks fit to ensure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of the review and are informed of any draft proposals or recommendations. In addition to consulting with the wider public, the Council undertakes to meet these duties by writing to:

- The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales;
- The Town and Community Councils across the principal council area;
- The Senedd Members representing the area;
- The Regional Senedd Members for the area;
- The Members of UK Parliament representing the area;
- Elected Members;
- Police & Crime Commissioner;
- South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority;
- Welsh Language Commissioner;
- The Welsh Government;
- Trade Unions; and
- Ordnance Survey.

The Council will also give official notice at different stages of the review, deposit copies of reports and documents at the Council's Electoral Services Office and place appropriate documents on the Council's website.

Comments and submissions may be made at two stages of the review, the initial investigations and draft proposals consultation periods.

All comments and submissions will be given due consideration in the review if the following criteria are met: -

- Comments are received by 11.59pm of the timetabled deadline.
- All comments are received with a name and address identifying the sender. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted, though personal details of members of the public will not be made public. Submissions from representative bodies and persons such as Councillors and Members of the Senedd etc will be named within the report.
- Where an organisation or an individual is making submissions concerning the review, they shall show how either maintaining the status-quo or making changes are desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government.

Council Size Policy

The Councils' community review will be undertaken subject to section 25 of the Act and therefore will focus on making boundary changes to ensure that community boundaries reflect the identities and interests of the communities across the principal council area and that they are both effective and convenient. Any consequential changes to electoral arrangements will only be made when changes to community or community ward boundaries have been made.

The Council has stated that communities should be represented by no less than 7 councillors. Community Council areas should have no fewer than a total of 700 electors (i.e. the total of the communities wards within that town/community council area);

The principal council has also stated that community wards should consist of no less than 250 electors for, and ratios of councillors to electors are:

- a minimum of 1 : 500 for urban areas, and
- a minimum of 1 : 250 for rural/mixed areas;

Welsh Language Names Policy

In the creation of any new names the Council will consult the Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC). The WLC is responsible for advising on the standard forms of Welsh place-names. The WLC has convened a Place-names Standardisation Panel to provide recommendations and expert advice in this field. In forming its recommendations, the Panel follows national standardisation guidelines and also gives consideration to the meaning, history and etymology of the place-names, as well as their usage. The WLC will be included as a mandatory consultee in the review.

Timetable for the Review

The review will start in April 2024 with final recommendations being provisionally scheduled to be submitted in March 2025. Any changes that occur as a result of the review process would then come into effect for the next Local Government Elections in 2027.

Action	Period	Date
Start of Review and initial publicity		May 2024
Initial Investigations	6 Weeks	July 2024 to August 2024
Draft Proposal Publication/ Consultation	6 Weeks	November 2024 to December 2024
Final Recommendation Submission		March 2025

Supporting Information

Further information relating to the review, including electorate figures, a map of the existing community boundaries and guidance, are available on the Councils' website.