

Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru

2026 Review of Senedd Constituencies

Guide to the 2026 Review

July 2024

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at enquiries@boundaries.wales

This document is also available from our website at www.dbcc.wales.gov

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This document is available in Welsh

The Commission welcomes correspondence and telephone calls
in Welsh or English.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1.1 The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru ('the Commission') is an independent and impartial Welsh Government Sponsored Body, and our current membership is:

Chair	Beverley Smith
Deputy Chair	Michael Imperato
Commissioners	Dianne Bevan
	Frank Cuthbert
	Ginger Wiegand
Chief Executive	Shereen Williams MBE OSTJ DL

1.2 We are responsible for reviewing Senedd constituency boundaries in Wales on the basis of rules laid down by the [Senedd Cymru \(Members and Elections\) Act 2024](#) and required to submit a formal report with our final decisions before 1 April 2025.

1.3 In order to prepare our report we will carry out a review process and this will involve a significant change the existing Senedd constituencies across Wales. We refer to this process as 'the 2026 Review'.

1.4 Public consultation will play an important part in the 2026 Review. We will develop and publish initial proposals setting out the 16 new Senedd constituencies we believe to be appropriate with both Welsh and English language names or where appropriate a single name, as well as a designation for each constituency across Wales as either a county constituency or a borough constituency. These constituencies will be formed by the combination of 2 contiguous (2 constituencies must be touching i.e. have a shared boundary) UK parliamentary constituencies. We will then take into account written representations from the public about our proposals received during a 4-week consultation period. Having considered the representations received the Commission will, if appropriate, publish a revised set of proposals. These will also be subject to a 4-week written consultation period. Having considered all the representations received across the 2 consultation periods, the Commission will then prepare a final report. The decisions set out in our final report will be implemented by a subsequent process as outlined in the Act.

1.5 We have produced this guide to help explain in more detail how the process for the 2026 Review will work. This guide is not intended to be a full statement of the law about the review. Instead, it covers what legislation says the Commission must do and the policies the Commission has decided to adopt in developing its proposals and final decisions.

1.6 We hope this guide will clarify our processes and policies. We also hope that it will encourage those who may be thinking of making their views known to do so in a well-informed and effective manner. However, we recognise that individuals may wish to ask questions and we would ask that these be addressed to us at:

Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Telephone: 029 2046 4819
Fax: 029 2046 4823
Email: enquiries@dbcc.gov.wales
Website: www.dbcc.gov.wales

We will be updating information on our website throughout our review process and key documents will be available through the website.

- 1.7 We wish to stress that this review relates solely to the Senedd constituencies and does not affect parliamentary constituencies; principal council, electoral ward or community boundaries; taxes; or services.

Chapter 2: Developing proposals – requirements and policy

Requirements of the Act

- 2.1 The Act sets out 3 requirements that are relevant to the development of proposals for individual constituencies. These requirements are that the Commission must conduct a review to determine:
- which contiguous UK parliamentary constituencies in Wales are to be combined to create the areas of the 16 Senedd constituencies;
 - the names of the Senedd constituencies, and
 - whether each Senedd constituency is designated a county or a borough constituency. (further information is given in paragraph 2.13 below)

Other statutory factors

- 2.2 The Act specifies a number of other factors that the Commission may take into account as it develops proposals and recommendations for Senedd constituencies, specifically:
- local government boundaries that exist on the review date;
 - special geographical considerations, including, in particular, the size, shape and accessibility of a proposed Senedd constituency;
 - any local ties (including local ties connected to the use of the Welsh language) that would be broken by the proposed pairings.

Local government boundaries and local ties

- 2.3 The Commission may take into account local government boundaries in developing its proposals and recommendations for Senedd constituencies. These include both the external boundaries of principal councils, and their internal electoral ward, community, or community ward boundaries. That said the Commission has to use the UK parliamentary constituencies to create the new Senedd constituencies. Matters of the Welsh language, culture, history, socioeconomics are all aspects that can be considered under the factor of local ties.

Special geographical considerations

- 2.4 The Commission considers that special geographical considerations that may have an impact on the boundaries of constituencies will primarily relate to physical geography such as mountains, hills, lakes, rivers, estuaries and islands, rather than to human or social geography.
- 2.5 While the Commission will seek to take account of principal council external boundaries as far as practicable, it may nevertheless frequently be necessary to cross these boundaries to

form constituencies as the Commission is required to combine existing UK parliamentary constituencies.

- 2.6 The Commission considers that existing community boundaries are likely to have been created in recognition of local ties and are therefore likely to reflect local ties. The Commission's policy is therefore not to divide existing communities when it develops proposals and recommendations for Senedd constituencies, unless there is no other available solution.
- 2.7 The policy of the Commission is to consider all the factors listed in the Act as far as possible.

Factors the Commission will not consider

Impact on future election results

- 2.8 The Commission is an independent and impartial body. As such, existing voting patterns and the prospective fortunes of political parties do not enter its considerations during a review.

Naming and designating constituencies

- 2.9 In making its recommendations, the Commission is also required by the Act to specify a name and designation for each proposed constituency.

Naming

- 2.10 The Act states that each constituency in Wales must have a single name, unless the Commission considers doing so would be unacceptable, in which case they must propose different names for communication through Welsh and English. The Commission will consult with the Welsh Language Commissioner on the orthography of the proposed names.
- 2.11 For its initial proposals, the Commission will use a name that reflects the contiguous UK parliamentary constituencies which have been combined. The Commission will list the UK parliamentary constituencies alphabetically (based on the Welsh language) and use a conjunction such as 'and' if required. The Commission will consider representations on names as part of the 2026 Review.

Designating

- 2.13 The Act also requires that each constituency be 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.

Welsh language

- 2.14 The Commission is committed to the use of the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality and welcomes correspondence in either language.
- 2.15 The Commission will publish all its guidance documents, reports and the representations it receives throughout the 2026 Review in both Welsh and English on its website.

The impact of the legislation

- 2.16 The Act will mean that the number of Senedd constituencies in Wales will be reduced from 40 to 16, and every constituency will be represented by 6 members. The existing 20 regional Senedd seats will no longer exist. This will result in 96 Senedd members across Wales. The new Senedd constituencies will be formed by combining the areas of 2 contiguous UK parliamentary constituencies. The result will be a fundamental change to the existing pattern of Senedd constituencies in Wales.
- 2.17 The Commission wishes to make clear from the outset that it has no ability to change anything in the legislation and therefore will not be able to consider representations that comment on the number of members or any other factors set out in the legislation. The Commission's role is to determine the new Senedd constituencies as set out in the legislation.

Chapter 3: Developing proposals

- 3.1 The 2026 Review will follow a detailed process laid down by the Act. That process involves the development of proposals by the Commission, followed by opportunities for individuals and organisations to submit written representations.
- 3.2 At the conclusion of the process, the Commission will prepare a final report containing its recommendations for Senedd constituencies in Wales. Those recommendations will then be implemented by a process in the Senedd.

The importance of participation

- 3.3 The Commission wishes to encourage individuals and organisations interested in its proposals for their area to make written representations to the Commission, whether for or against the proposals.
- 3.4 Those who give their views are requested to say whether they approve of, or object to, the Commission's proposals. Objectors are particularly advised to say what they propose in place of the Commission's proposals. An objection accompanied by a viable counterproposal is likely to carry more weight than a simple statement of objection. In this respect a counterproposal addressing the composition of each constituency in an area will generally be viewed as more persuasive than a proposal for the composition of only one constituency that does not address any knock-on effects on the other constituencies.
- 3.5 Individuals and organisations are particularly encouraged to make representations at the appropriate stage of the statutory process. For example, people who do not submit representations in support of the Commission's initial proposals may find that the Commission subsequently publishes, in the light of objections received from others, revised proposals or final decisions that they do not support. It is therefore important (by way of example) that people who support the Commission's initial proposals should say so during the initial consultation period (which is described further below).
- 3.6 Full and timely participation in the 2026 Review will help the Commission to understand local opinion on its proposals more accurately. This will increase the likelihood that the Commission's final decisions will be generally acceptable to the majority of those who will have to live and work with them.
- 3.7 If you would like to be informed when the Commission publishes documentation in relation to the 2026 Review, you can sign up for updates on our website.

Preparation of initial proposals

- 3.8 At the start of the statutory process, the Commission will prepare its initial proposals for Senedd constituencies in Wales.

- 3.9 The Commission will develop its initial proposals in the light of the rules and factors referred to in Chapter 2 of this guide. The Commission will not use a single, predetermined geographic starting point for the development of its proposals. Instead, a wide range of options will be considered. Only after the consideration of a number of schemes of constituencies for the whole of Wales will the Commission decide on initial proposals.

Publication of initial proposals

- 3.10 When the Commission has decided on its initial proposals, it will publish the proposals and an accompanying report on its website, together with detailed information about how and when views on those proposals can be submitted.
- 3.11 In addition to the initial proposals and its report on them, the Commission will provide on its website detailed maps showing, among other information, the proposed name, designation and boundary of each proposed constituency, to help the public better understand the proposals.
- 3.12 To publicise the initial proposals, the Commission will embark on a publicity exercise focused on bringing the proposals and the opportunity to submit views on the proposals to the attention of the public. The Commission will also send links via email of its proposals to interested parties.

Initial consultation period

- 3.13 Following publication of the Commission's initial proposals, there will be a 4-week period during which written representations can be made to the Commission in relation to the initial proposals. This is known as the initial consultation period.
- 3.14 Details of how individuals and organisations can make written representations during the initial consultation period, including the last date for receipt of representations, will be published alongside the initial proposals themselves. It is crucial that representations are submitted in enough time to ensure that they are received within the initial consultation period.
- 3.15 As soon as possible after the end of the initial consultation period, the Commission will publish all the representations it receives during that period on its website in both Welsh and English.

Consideration of representations and revised proposals

- 3.16 Following the end of the initial consultation period the Commission will consider all the written representations received.
- 3.17 The Commission will consider whether and to what extent revisions should be made to its initial proposals, this includes the names of constituencies.

- 3.18 If, following its considerations, the Commission decides to revise its initial proposals, it will also publish its revised proposals, together with an accompanying report, before the start of a second consultation period of 4 weeks. Any revised proposals and accompanying materials will be published on the Commission's website. The Commission will also send links via email of any revised proposals to interested parties.
- 3.19 Representations in relation to any revised proposals can be made during the 4 weeks of the second consultation period.
- 3.20 The Commission will publish all the written representations received during the second consultation period in relation to any revised proposals in both Welsh and English on the Commission's website at the same time as it publishes its final decisions.

Final decisions and report

- 3.21 After the end of the second consultation period, the Commission will consider what final decisions to make for Senedd constituencies in Wales. The Commission will take into account all written representations received during the initial consultation period and the second consultation period (including in relation to any revised proposals published by the Commission prior to the second consultation period).
- 3.22 Once the Commission has made its final decisions for Wales, it will then prepare and submit a formal written report to the Welsh Ministers before 1 April 2025. The report will be published by the Commission on its website. The Commission will also send links via email of its decisions to interested parties. The report will contain a description of the Commission's review, a description of the Commission's final decisions including the names and designations of each of the constituencies, and a set of maps to illustrate the boundaries of the constituencies.
- 3.23 The submission of the formal final report will conclude the Commission's role in the review process. The procedure for implementing constituencies is the responsibility of Welsh Ministers and is set out in the Act.

Chapter 4: Publicity

Review publicity

- 4.1 The Act places a duty on the Commission to inform any person it considers appropriate of how to access its reports, invite representation on its reports and to notify any person it considers appropriate of the periods of consultation.
- 4.2 To publicise the initial proposals, the Commission will embark on a publicity exercise focused on bringing the proposals and the opportunity to submit views on the proposals to the attention of the public.
- 4.3 The Commission has published a separate communication strategy which outlines the steps the Commission will take to publicise the review and its proposals and decisions. This document can be found on the Commission's website.

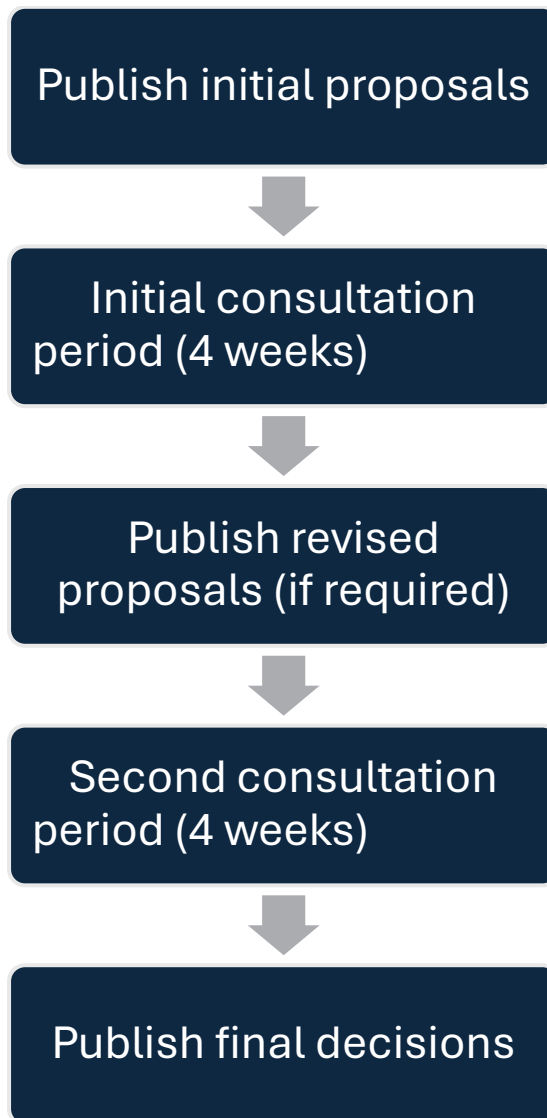
Chapter 5: After the final report

Implementation

- 5.1 After the Welsh Ministers have received the Commission's final report, the report must be laid as soon as reasonably practicable before the Senedd. Welsh Ministers must make regulations giving effect to the decisions in the Commission's final report as soon as reasonably practicable after the report has been laid before the Senedd and in any event within 14 weeks of the report being laid before the Senedd.
- 5.2 Welsh Ministers may not modify the decisions of the Commission, unless it has been expressly requested to do so (in writing and with reasons) by the Commission.

APPENDIX A

PROCESS FLOW CHART



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