



FULL COUNCIL REPORT

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Service Area	Democratic Services
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	6 October 2021

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

2023 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES – INITIAL PROPOSALS

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Boundary Commission for Wales has published an Initial Proposals Report on the 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales, for public consultation between 8 September and 3 November 2021.
- 1.2 The changes across Wales are based on a reduction from 40 constituencies to 32 constituencies.
- 1.3 Initial proposals are that the entire County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil principal council area be combined with electoral wards within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf which currently form part of the Cynon Valley Constituency; together with the Nelson ward within the County Borough of Caerphilly which currently forms part of the existing Caerphilly Constituency.
- 1.4 The proposed new constituency would have 71,218 electors which is 3% below the UK electoral quota (UKEQ) of 73,393 electors per constituency.
- 1.5 The proposed name for the constituency is Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare / Merthyr Tudful ac Aberdâr.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales' Initial Proposals report for the 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales be noted.

- 2.2 That Council considers the recommendations contained within the initial report and the Leaders of each political group and the Independent Members provide comments to the Democratic Services Department for collation and return to the Boundary Commission for Wales.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Boundary Commission for Wales ('the Commission') is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in Wales.
- 3.2 On 24th March 2016 the Commission announced the start of the 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (the Act) as amended by the Parliamentary Voting System and constituencies Act 2011
- 3.3 In March 2020, the UK Government announced that it would not implement the recommendations of the 2018 review. Instead, it announced that it would introduce a Bill to amend the rules by which boundary reviews are carried out.
- 3.4 The new Bill which received Royal Assent in December 2020, made significant changes to the Act and abandoned the plans within the 2018 review to reduce the size of the House of Commons to 600 seats.
- 3.5 The size of the House of Commons remains fixed at 650 seats, but 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.
- 3.6 A requirement of the Act is that the full review – where the current initial proposals are the start of the process and are based on the number of registered electors on 2 March 2020 - must be completed by 1 July 2023. Another report is required by 1 October 2031, with further reports every eight years thereafter.

4.0 CRITERIA FOR REVIEWING PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

- 4.1 When developing their proposals for the 2023 review, the Commission were mindful of the of the requirements in the Act which provide that constituencies should have an electorate that is no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the UK electoral quota (UKEQ).
- 4.2 To the nearest whole number, the UKEQ is 73,393; so every constituency must have an electorate no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062.
- 4.3 In Wales, the only constituency that is not subject to the UKEQ is Ynys Mon.

4.4 When compiling their initial proposals the Commission also took into account a number of other factors, specifically:

- special geographical considerations, including size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
- local government boundaries as of 1 December 2020;
- boundaries of existing constituencies;
- any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies; and
- the inconveniences such changes would create.

4.5 Factors that the Commission did not consider include:

- any existing voting patterns;
- any new boundaries subsequent to 1 December 2020;
- any changes to the size of the electorate after 2 March 2020.

5.0 NAMING AND DESIGNATING CONSTITUENCIES

5.1 In making proposals, the Commission was also required to specify a name and designation for each constituency using the following rules:

- when constituencies remained largely unchanged, the existing constituency name should be retained;
- for a new constituency, the name should normally reflect that of the principal council(s);
- the Commission adopts compass-point names when there is no more suitable name;
- where constituencies contain more than a small rural element they would be designated as county constituencies and in other cases, they would be designated as borough constituencies; and
- the designation would be suffixed to the constituency name.

5.2 For a new constituency, it was felt that the name should reflect that of the principal council wholly or mainly contained in the constituency. However, if there was a suitable alternative name which generally commanded greater local support, the Commission would consider that alternative.

5.3 The Commission also understood that it was appropriate for each constituency in Wales to have an alternate name in Welsh or English. They have therefore provided official alternatives in Welsh for those constituencies names in English, and vice versa.

6.0 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS ACROSS WALES

6.1 There are relatively few electors in rural parts of Wales which inevitably means that, under the new arrangements, some constituencies will cover a large area.

- 6.2 Furthermore, due to the relatively low numbers of electors in some of the South Wales Valleys, constituencies have to encompass more than one valley.
- 6.3 The only existing constituency that is not subject to the operation of the UKEQ in Wales is Ynys Môn.
- 6.4 There are presently 38 constituencies below the minimum number of electors, one above the maximum and only one constituency that falls within the statutory range.
- 6.5 The initial proposals bring all constituencies with the exception of *Ynys Môn* to within the statutory range.
- 6.6 Some electoral wards are currently split across more than one existing Parliamentary constituency because of changes to local government ward boundaries since the last review of Parliamentary constituencies. In the initial proposals, they have been combined to form one electoral ward within one existing constituency. Although this is not an issue that affects Merthyr Tydfil.

7.0 WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MERTHYR TYDFIL

- 7.1 Under the proposals, six principal councils – one of which is Merthyr Tydfil - would be wholly contained within new constituencies.
- 7.2 The existing Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney Parliamentary Constituency is made up of all eleven electoral wards within the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, together with five electoral wards from the County Borough of Caerphilly. However, both the existing Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney constituency and the Cynon Valley constituency are currently below the statutory electoral requirements.
- 7.3 In the new initial report, whilst the Commission acknowledges that the proposed constituency does not follow the geography of the valleys from north to south, they believe that there are good road links across the Heads of the Valleys, which maintain an accessible link throughout the area.
- 7.4 To meet the statutory electorate range, the Commission also incorporated the Nelson electoral ward from the Caerphilly constituency as it is connected to the remainder of the constituency by road and is similar in character to the rest of the proposed constituency.
- 7.5 The Commission's proposals, therefore are that a county constituency be created from:
 - 7.5.1 The entire County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil principal area , comprising all 11 electoral wards: Bedlinog; Cyfarthfa; Dowlais; Gurnos; Merthyr Vale; Park; Penydarren; Plymouth; Town; Treharris and Vaynor
 - 7.5.2 Wards within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf which currently form part of the Cynon Valley county constituency: Aberdare East; Aberdare West/Llwydcoed; Cwmbach; Hirwaun; Pen-y-Waun and Rhigos.

7.5.3 The electoral ward of Nelson within the County Borough of Caerphilly which currently forms part of the existing Caerphilly county constituency.

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

7.7 The proposed name for the constituency is Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare / Merthyr Tudful ac Aberdâr.

7.8 A plan showing the wards and electorates for the proposed new county constituency are shown at **Appendix 1**.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no financial implications for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

9.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Neutral / Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	0 of 4	0 of 4	4 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	0 of 5	0 of 5	5 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics <i>(including Welsh Language)</i>	0 of 10	0 of 10	10 of 10
4. Socio-economic Disadvantage	0 of 6	0 of 6	6 of 6
5. Consultation and Engagement	Undertaken	Due to be Undertaken	Not Required
	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 of 1
6. Data and Evidence to inform the proposal	Yes		No
	0 of 1		1 of 1
7. Biodiversity and the resilience of Ecosystems	Maintained	Enhanced	Reduced
	0 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1
			Neutral / N/A
			1 of 1

Summary	
The main impacts are:	The proposals included in the review report do not directly affect the boundaries of the local authority. They only relate to Parliamentary constituency boundaries.

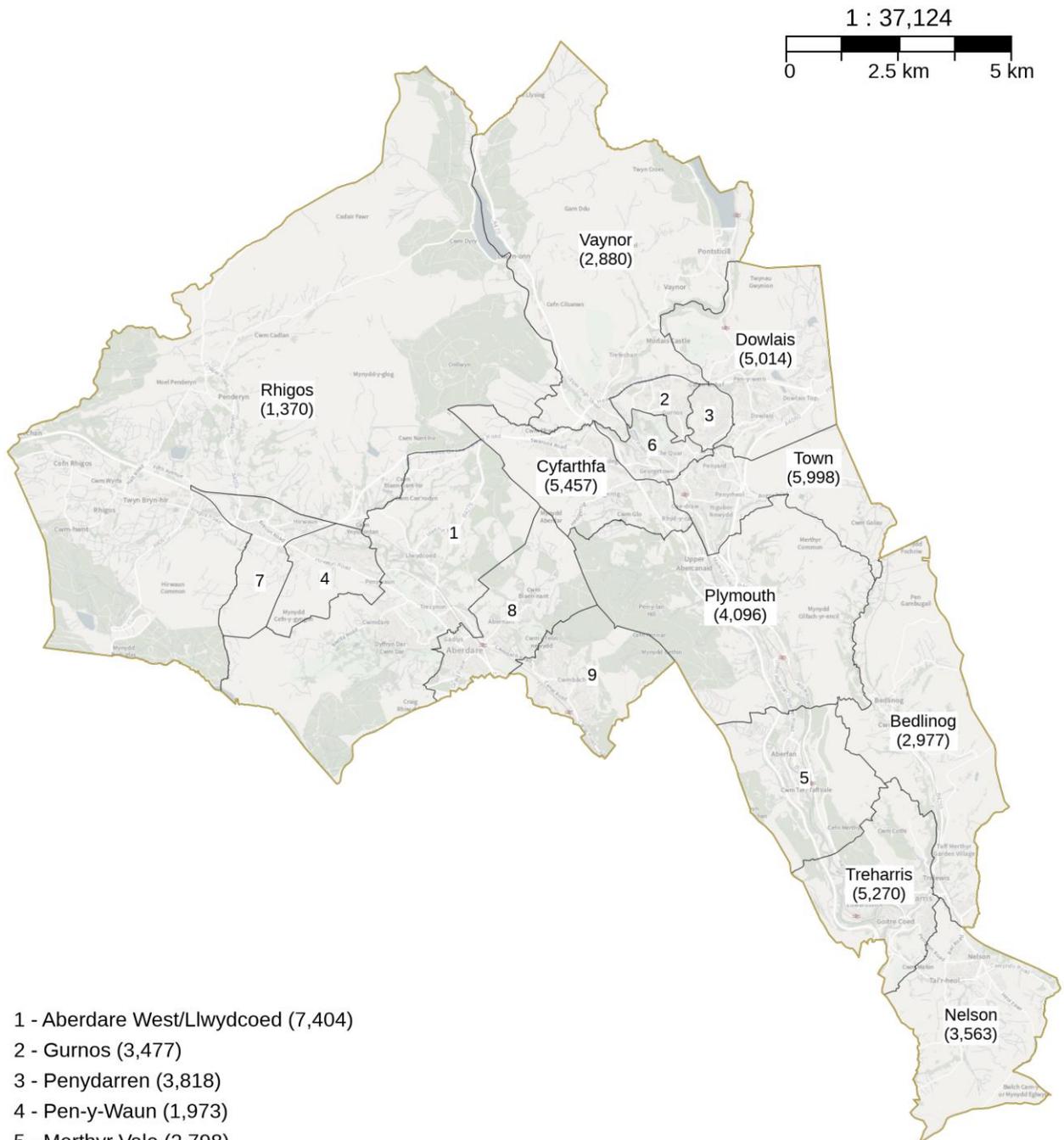
**ELLIS COOPER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**COUNCILLOR ANDREW BARRY
CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE
AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Guide for the 2023 Review	2021	www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk
Initial Proposals Report : 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies	September 2021	www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk Copies of the report and large scale plans are also available to view at the Central Library
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.

Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare (Merthyr Tudful ac Aberdâr)



- 1 - Aberdare West/Llwydcoed (7,404)
- 2 - Gurnos (3,477)
- 3 - Penydarren (3,818)
- 4 - Pen-y-Waun (1,973)
- 5 - Merthyr Vale (2,798)
- 6 - Park (3,296)
- 7 - Hirwaun (3,167)
- 8 - Aberdare East (4,909)
- 9 - Cwmbach (3,751)

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