

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES



Comisiwn Ffiniau
Llywodraeth Leol
i Gymru



Local Government
Boundary Commission
for Wales

**REVIEW OF COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES IN THE
COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

DRAFT PROPOSALS

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 We the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) have completed the first stage of the review of community boundaries in the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent as directed by the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government in his Direction to us dated 31 March 2008 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The purpose of the review is to consider whether, in the interests of effective and convenient local government, the Commission should propose changes to the present community boundaries. The review is being conducted under the provisions of Section 55 of the Local Government Act 1972 (the Act).
- 1.3 Section 60 of the Act lays down procedural guidelines, which are to be followed in carrying out a review. In line with that guidance we wrote on 1 May 2008 to The Community Councils of Abertillery and Llanhilleth, Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina, and Tredegar, the Member of Parliament for the local constituency, the Assembly Members for the area and other interested parties to inform them of our intention to conduct the review and to request their preliminary views. We also publicised our intention to conduct the review in local newspapers circulating in the area and asked the Councils to display public notices. Notification of the start of the review and the closing date for representations to be made (4 July 2008) was given on the web sites of both the Commission and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 We propose that:

- ... the boundary between the Communities of Abertillery and Llanhilleth and Nantyglo and Blaina in the area of Bourneville be realigned to follow the boundary shown in green on the map at Appendix 3;
- ... the boundary between the Communities of Beaufort and Brynmawr in the area of Twyncynghordy Road be realigned to follow the boundary shown in green on the map at Appendix 4;
- ... the Community of Beaufort be dissolved and three new Communities of Badminton, Beaufort and Rassau be created following the boundaries shown in green on the map at Appendix 5;
- ... the boundary between the Communities of Brynmawr and Nantyglo and Blaina be realigned to follow the boundary shown in green on the map at Appendix 7;
- ... the Community of Ebbw Vale be dissolved and two new Communities of Ebbw Vale North and Ebbw Vale South be created following the boundaries shown in green on the map at Appendix 9;

- 2.2 We also suggest that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council consider a review of the community wards for Tredegar Community Council.

3. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE DRAFT PROPOSALS

- 3.1 We received representations from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council; Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council, Brynmawr Town Council and Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council. We considered all of these representations carefully before we formulated our proposals. Details of all of these representations can be found at Appendix 2

4. ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 We have considered suggested changes to community boundaries in the following areas: The Bourneville settlement that falls within both Abertillery and Llanhilleth, and Nantyglo and Blaina Communities, Beaufort Community Wards of Badminton, Beaufort and Rassau, Beaufort and Brynmawr, Brynmawr, and Nantyglo and Blaina, Cwm and Ebbw Vale, Ebbw Vale North and South Wards, and Sirhowy and Central and West Tredegar Wards of Tredegar Community.

Abertillery and Llanhilleth, and Nantyglo and Blaina

- 4.2 We have noted the suggestions from Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council, and Nantyglo and Blaina Community Council regarding a boundary change in the Bourneville settlement area. We have considered both suggestions and we noted that the major part of the settlement of Bourneville is currently within the Community of Abertillery and Llanhilleth and it appeared to us to be more closely linked with that community than with the Community of Nantyglo and Blaina. We consider that it would be appropriate to realign the boundary to follow the course of the Ebbw Fach river to include the whole of the Bourneville settlement within the Cwmtillery Ward of the Community of Abertillery and Llanhilleth. We therefore propose a change to the boundary between the two communities as shown in green on the map at Appendix 3.

Beaufort and Brynmawr

- 4.3 Consideration was given to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's request to amend the boundary between Beaufort and Brynmawr Communities in the Twyncynghordy Road area to address a boundary anomaly involving a newly built single residential property. After a site visit it appears that the only access to this property is via the Community of Beaufort due to a locked gate obstructing access along Twyncynghordy Road from Brynmawr. We propose that it would be appropriate to realign the boundary to move the property from Brynmawr into Beaufort (map at Appendix 4).

Beaufort

- 4.4 We noted that that the Community of Beaufort, which is un-warded, had a long history of being divided into the three local government electoral divisions of Badminton, Beaufort and Rassau. Since the Community of Beaufort does not have

a Community Council it would not be possible, as part of any review of community electoral arrangements, to create Badminton, Beaufort and Rassau Community Wards to be coterminous with the local government electoral divisions. A strict application of the rules governing principal area electoral reviews in future would leave the only choice for the area being to create a large multi-member electoral division made up by the whole of the Community of Beaufort. In order to allow as much flexibility as possible during the next review of electoral arrangements for Blaenau Gwent we propose that the current Community of Beaufort be separated into three new communities, namely the Communities of Badminton, Beaufort and Rassau (map at Appendix 5). We consider that, in the main, the existing electoral division boundaries would be appropriate as community boundaries. We do however propose some changes as shown in green on the map at Appendix 5 to ensure that the boundaries follow indentifiable topographic features.

Brynmawr, and Nantyglo and Blaina

- 4.5 We have noted the suggestions from Brynmawr Town Council and Nantyglo and Blaina Community Council regarding a boundary change in the Brynmawr South Ward of Brynmawr Community and the Nantyglo Ward of the Nantyglo and Blaina Community areas.
- 4.6 Brynmawr Town Council suggested a change to the boundary to incorporate a large number of residential properties within their community as shown on the map at Appendix 6. We noted however, that the only access to these properties was through Nantyglo and Blaina and this appeared to us to indicate that the properties were appropriately included within the Nantyglo and Blaina Community.
- 4.7 Nantyglo and Blaina Community Council made a suggestion that would move a smaller area from Nantyglo and Blaina into Brynmawr and incorporate the Blaenant Industrial Estate, Brynmawr Primary School and Health Centre within the Nantyglo and Blaina Community as shown on the map at Appendix 7. We noted that this suggested realignment would remove Brynmawr Primary School and Health Centre from the Brynmawr area.
- 4.8 We have noted that, because of developments that have taken place in this area since the existing community boundary was defined, the boundary between the Communities of Brynmawr and Nantyglo and Blaina is, in parts, no longer clearly defined. We are of the view that it is desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government to make changes to the community boundary to ensure that it follows indentifiable topographic features. We considered both suggestions and propose that it would be more appropriate to realign the boundary using a modified version of the suggestion made by Nantyglo and Blaina to realign the community boundary to the south of Brynmawr Primary School therefore keeping Brynmawr Primary School and Health Centre within the Brynmawr area (map at Appendix 7). This proposal does not involve the transfer of any electors.

Cwm and Ebbw Vale

- 4.9 We noted the suggestion by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to realign the boundary between the Communities of Cwm and Ebbw Vale as the current

boundary clearly divides several properties within an established estate. After conducting a site visit to check the viability of the Council's suggested boundary change, we propose that it would be appropriate to realign the boundary to follow the adjacent road around the Cwm Community to include those properties currently in Ebbw Vale within the Cwm Community boundary (map at Appendix 8). We did note however that this would leave some properties on Hall Street, whose only access appears to be from the Cwm community area, within Ebbw Vale. We would welcome further comments in respect of this area before we consider our Final Proposals.

Ebbw Vale

- 4.10 We noted that the Community of Ebbw Vale, which is un-warded, had a long history of being divided into the two local government electoral divisions, namely Ebbw Vale North and Ebbw Vale South. Since the Community of Ebbw Vale does not have a community council it would not be possible to create new community wards to be coterminous with the local government electoral divisions. As with Beaufort (4.4), in order to allow as much flexibility as possible during the next review of electoral arrangements for Blaenau Gwent, we propose that the current Community of Ebbw Vale be dissolved and two new communities be created from the existing Community of Ebbw Vale, namely the Communities of Ebbw Vale North and Ebbw Vale South (map at Appendix 9).

Tredegar

- 4.11 We noted the suggested ward boundary changes made by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council within the Community of Tredegar (maps at Appendices 10 and 11). This review is being carried out under Section 55 of the Act which allows us to make proposals for the electoral arrangements of a community that are consequential on a change to the community boundary. We have received no suggestions for a change to the boundary of the Tredegar Community. We therefore make no proposals for changes to the ward boundaries for the Community of Tredegar at this stage. However, we do suggest that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council consider a review of the community wards for Tredegar Community Council.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Having considered the evidence available to us at this stage of our review we propose that the boundaries of the Communities of Abertillery and Llanhilleth, Beaufort, Brynmawr, Cwm, Ebbw Vale, and Nantyglo and Blaina should be realigned in the area under review to follow the boundaries shown in green on the maps at Appendices 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9.
- 5.2 Detailed maps to a larger scale showing the proposed new boundaries can be inspected at the offices of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and at the office of the Commission in Cardiff.

5.3 This report details our draft proposals for change to the community boundaries in the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent and we would welcome comments on the proposals.

6. CONSEQUENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 In considering the various changes to the community boundaries it was also necessary for us to take account of the effects on the electoral arrangements for community councils and the principal authority, which would result from these changes. This section of our report details our proposals for consequential changes to the electoral arrangements. We would also welcome comments on this aspect of our report. The electoral statistics used in this report were provided by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Community Council Electoral Arrangements

6.2 The Community Council of Abertillery and Llanhilleth is formed by a grouping of the Communities of Abertillery and Llanhilleth and is currently divided, for Community electoral purposes, into the community wards of Abertillery, Cwmtillery, Six Bells, Aberbeeg and Llanhilleth. The following table shows the number of electors and councillors for each ward.

Community	Ward	Electors	Councillors	E/C*
Abertillery	Abertillery	3,381	5	676
	Cwmtillery	3,637	5	727
	Six Bells	1,899	3	633
Llanhilleth	Aberbeeg	1,891	3	630
	Llanhilleth	1,779	3	593
		12,587	19	662

* Electors per Councillor

6.3 Under our proposals for the boundary between the Community of Abertillery and Llanhilleth and the Community of Nantyglo and Blaina, the number of electors in the Cwmtillery ward will increase by 59 to 3,696. The following table shows the resultant number of electors and councillors for each ward.

Community	Ward	Electors	Councillors	E/C*
Abertillery	Abertillery	3,381	5	676
	Cwmtillery	3,696	5	739
	Six Bells	1,899	3	633
Llanhilleth	Aberbeeg	1,891	3	630
	Llanhilleth	1,779	3	593
		12,646	19	666

6.4 The Community of Nantyglo and Blaina is currently divided, for Community electoral purposes, into the community wards of Blaina and Nantyglo. The following table shows the number of electors and councillors for each ward.

Community	Ward	Electors	Councillors	E/C*
Nantyglo and Blaina	Blaina	3,595	8	449
	Nantyglo	3,478	8	435
		7,073	16	442

- 6.5 Under our proposals for the boundary between the Community of Abertillery and Llanhilleth and the Community of Nantyglo and Blaina, the number of electors in the Blaina ward will decrease by 59 to 7,014. The proposal for the boundary between the Communities of Brynmawr and Nantyglo and Blaina will have no effect on the number of electors. The following table shows the resultant number of electors and councillors for each ward.

Community	Ward	Electors	Councillors	E/C*
Nantyglo and Blaina	Blaina	3,536	8	442
	Nantyglo	3,478	8	435
		7,014	16	438

- 6.6 The Community of Beaufort, which does not currently have a Community Council, has 8,059 electors. Under our proposals for a change to the boundary between Beaufort and Brynmawr the number of electors in Beaufort will increase by 2. Under our proposals for the existing Community of Beaufort, three new Communities will be created: Badminton with 2,566 electors, Beaufort with 3,007 electors and Rassau with 2,488 electors.

- 6.7 The Community of Brynmawr is currently divided, for Community electoral purposes, into the community wards of Brynmawr North and Brynmawr South. The following table shows the number of electors and councillors for each ward.

Community	Ward	Electors	Councillors	E/C*
Brynmawr	Brynmawr North	2,066	8	258
	Brynmawr South	2,169	8	271
		4,235	16	265

- 6.8 Under our proposals for the boundary between the Community of Brynmawr and Beaufort the number of electors in Brynmawr North ward will decrease by 2 to 2,064. The proposal for the boundary between the Communities of Brynmawr and Nantyglo and Blaina will have no effect on the number of electors. The following table shows the resultant number of electors and councillors for each ward.

Community	Ward	Electors	Councillors	E/C*
Brynmawr	Brynmawr North	2,064	8	258
	Brynmawr South	2,169	8	271
		4,233	16	265

- 6.9 The Community of Cwm does not currently have a Community Council but currently has 3,343 electors. Under our proposals the number of electors in Cwm will increase by 88 to 3,431.

- 6.10 The Community of Ebbw Vale, which does not currently have a Community Council, has 6,486 electors. Under our proposals two new communities will be created: Ebbw Vale North with 3,464 electors and Ebbw Vale South with 3,022 electors.
- 6.11 We are of the view that for all of the above Community Councils the changes to the number of electors as a consequence of the proposed boundary changes are not so significant as, at this time, to require either an increase or a decrease in the number of councillors representing each Community Council.

County Borough Council Electoral Arrangements

- 6.12 The Cwmtillery electoral division consists of the Community of Abertillery and currently has 3,637 electors represented by 3 Councillors. The proposed change to the boundary between the Communities of Nantyglo and Blaina, and Abertillery and Llanhilleth would mean the number of electors in the Cwmtillery electoral division would increase by 59 to 3,696.
- 6.13 The Beaufort electoral division consists of the Community of Beaufort and currently has 2,973 electors represented by 2 Councillors. The proposed change to the boundary between the Communities of Brynmawr and Beaufort would mean the number of electors in the Beaufort electoral division would increase by 2 to 2,975.
- 6.14 The Nantyglo electoral division consists of the Community of Nantyglo and Blaina and currently has 3,478 electors represented by 3 Councillors. The proposed change to the boundary between the Communities of Brynmawr, and Nantyglo and Blaina would have no effect on the number of electors in the Nantyglo electoral division
- 6.15 The Cwm electoral division consists of the Community of Cwm and currently has 3,343 electors represented by 2 Councillors. The proposed change to the boundary between the Communities of Ebbw Vale and Cwm would mean that the number of electors in the Cwm electoral division would increase by 88 to 3,431.
- 6.16 We are of the view that for all of the above electoral divisions the changes to the number of electors as a consequence of the proposed boundary changes are not so significant as, at this time, to require either an increase or a decrease in the number of councillors representing each electoral division. Within the next few years we are due to conduct a review of the electoral arrangements for all of the principal councils in Wales and we anticipate that we will receive directions from Welsh Ministers to guide us in the conduct of the review. At that time we will look in detail at the electoral arrangements for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and will take into account any changes that arise from these proposed changes to community boundaries.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 We wish to express our gratitude Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and the Community Councils for their assistance and to all persons and bodies who made representations to us.

8. RESPONSES TO THIS REPORT

- 8.1 All observations on this draft report should be sent to:

The Secretary
Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales
Caradog House
1-6 St Andrews Place
Cardiff CF10 3BE

not later than 8 May 2009.

9. THE NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 When we have considered the comments made to us in response to this draft report we shall submit our recommendations to the Welsh Assembly Government in the form of a report and proposals. It will then fall to the Welsh Assembly Government, if it thinks fit, to implement our recommendations either with or without modifications.

MR P J WOOD (Chair)

REV. HYWEL MEREDYDD DAVIES BD (Deputy Chair)

Mr D J BADER (Member)

E H LEWIS BSc. DPM FRSA FCIPD (Secretary)

March 2009

THE WELSH MINISTERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 PART IV

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR
WALES (REVIEW OF COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES)(COUNTY
BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT) DIRECTION 2008**

The Welsh Ministers give the following Direction to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales in exercise of the powers conferred upon the Secretary of State by section 56 of the Local Government Act 1972⁽¹⁾ which powers are now exercisable by the Welsh Ministers⁽²⁾:

1. In this Direction:

"the Act" ("y Ddeddf") means the Local Government Act 1972;

"the Commission" ("y Comisiwn") means the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales.

2. Pursuant to section 56(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers direct the Commission to conduct a review of the community boundaries in the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent for the purpose of considering whether or not to make such proposals in relation to the area reviewed as are authorised by section 54 of the Act and what proposals, if any, to make; and the Commission must, if they think fit, formulate such proposals accordingly.

Dr Brian Gibbons



Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

Date 31 (3) 08

⁽¹⁾ 1972 c.70; section 56 was amended by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994.

⁽²⁾ See the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999 (S.I. 1999/672) which transferred the functions of the Secretary of State to the National Assembly for Wales. The functions of the Assembly were subsequently transferred to the Welsh Ministers by schedule 11 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 (2006 c.38).

Summary of Initial Representations – Blaenau Gwent Community Review

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council proposed the following:

Brynmawr/Nantyglo and Blaina Communities

- Brynmawr Members requested the Commission to reconsider alignment of the boundary between Brynmawr and Nantyglo communities. Nantyglo Members wish to retain the status quo for these boundaries. In addition, the Brynmawr Members ask the Commission to consider the internal Ward boundary.
- That consideration would be given whether the area of Bourneville should remain in the Cwmtillery Community or transfer to Blaina Community. It was the view that if the Commission should consider it, then the views of the electorate, via a referendum, if necessary, should take place – 53 properties and 100 electors would be involved.

Abertillery and Llanhilleth Communities

- Members endorsed the observations made regarding Bourneville, that it shall be determined by the views of the electorate. No other views were expressed.

Beaufort, Ebbw Vale and Cwm Communities

- An alignment between Cwm and Ebbw Vale South would be made to address anomalies in the boundary and the A4046 road should form the boundary. No electorate is involved.
- That consideration would be given to amendment of the boundary between Beaufort and Brynmawr Communities to include a specific property, which appears to be isolated. 2 electors are involved.

Tredegar Community

- That a small anomaly in the boundary relating to properties at Brynmeadow Close and Lakeside Tredegar would be considered. This would transfer from the Central and West Ward to the Sirhowy Ward. Members in attendance at the meeting endorsed the recommendation. 13 properties and 23 electors are involved.
- That the Commission would consider amending the boundary between the Georgetown and Tredegar Central and West Wards to include the whole of Vale Terrace and Pochin Crescent in Georgetown Ward. It was suggested that the River Sirhowy would form a natural boundary.
- If the Commission were to consider this, it is suggested that the views of the electorate, by referendum if necessary, should take place. 207 properties and 360 electors are involved.

Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council submitted the following observations for consideration:

- A review of the boundary of the village of Aberbeeg. Approximately 75% of the village is in Blaenau Gwent; the remaining 25% in is Caerphilly. Aberbeeg is part of

the Community and Abertillery and Llanhilleth, which is in Blaenau Gwent. Abertillery and District Hospital and the Parish Church for Llanhilleth (Blaenau Gwent) - Christ Church – are both within the section of the village allocated to Caerphilly.

- The Council feel strongly that this anomaly should be corrected and the village of Aberbeeg united along geographical lines with the 25% being transferred to Blaenau Gwent.
- Like wise, the community of Bourneville is 80% within the Community of Abertillery and Llanhilleth and 20% in Blaina. The village has an Abertillery postcode and by transferring South Griffin Terrace, Glanyrafon Terrace and the Tylers Public House, 100% would be located in Abertillery. There would be a natural boundary between Abertillery and Blaina.
- Similarly the boundary between Swffryd (Blaenau Gwent) and Hafodryns (Caerphilly) is not a natural boundary. Hafodryns has a natural affinity to Blaenau Gwent, both geographically and socially.
- Further to this, the Council is concerned that the County Borough Council recommended that a referendum takes place in the Cwmtillery section of Bourneville to see if they wish to remain in the Cwmtillery Electoral Division or transfer to Blaina. The Council is of the opinion that Bourneville should be united in one or the other Electoral Wards. Not, as it is now, with approximately 80% in Abertillery and 20% in Blaina. If a referendum is to be held it must include the whole village, not just the part in Cwmtillery. The areas of Glanyrafon Terrace, South Griffin Terrace and the Tylers must be included in any form of consultation.

Brynmawr Town Council proposed the following change to the boundary line to the south of Brynmawr between the communities of Brynmawr and Nantyglo, as outlined on the attached plan.

- The Council stated that at present from the Blaina Road A467 By-Pass Roundabout the boundary proceeds northward along the centre of Blaina Road passing the Asda store and ex NMC factory and continues left, still centre road, to skirt the Stagecoach Bud Depot and then veers left in a westerly direction to proceed along the middle of Warwick Road. The result is, on the western side of the line, the Asda Superstore and Commercial Development (formerly the site of Semtex No. 1 factory), the Lakeside Housing Development, the ex NMC factory, the Stagecoach Depot and the south side of Warwick Road are in Nantyglo, when clearly geographically they are in Brynmawr. On the eastern side of the line Chapel Garage, the site of the Semtex No. 2 factory and the Semtex Boiler house are all in Brynmawr.
- It is Brynmawr Town Council's contention that a more sensible path for the boundary line would be for it to run from the Blaina Road A467 By-Pass Roundabout in a westerly direction along the Waun Pond Embankment Road i. e. Pond Road towards Winchestown. At the junction with Golf Road, the line should proceed right (in a roughly north-westerly direction) until it reaches the unadopted lane, which links it with the west side pathway skirting the 'Machine Pond' which

eventually links the Beaufort Community Boundary. The areas to the north and east of this proposed new path of the boundary would then form part of the Community of Brynmawr.

- This proposal has a geographic homogeneity as well as historic connotations. The 'lake/pond' is called the Waun Pond. This links with the far more historic name for Brynmawr of Waun Helygen and the local expression in years past of people from Nantyglo, that they were 'going up the Waun' i.e. to Brynmawr. Furthermore, the occupiers of the Lakeside Commercial Development all insist that their businesses are in Brynmawr.

Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council stated that the observations of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council were considered and it was recognised that any realignment of the boundary between Brynmawr and Nantyglo may effect the Lakeside retail and housing development parks and if so would result in disruption to 325 existing electors and the subsequent transfer of community tax currently paid to Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council being transferred to the more prosperous town of Brynmawr. Both Nantyglo and Blaina are ranked amongst the 100 most deprived wards in Wales.

Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council agrees with the viewpoint expressed by a Brynmawr Member during an internal meeting of Blaenau Gwent Council i. e. That the boundary is of a complicated nature and at one stage runs within 50 metres of the Brynmawr War Memorial, albeit Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council wonder, why this was raised as an issue now after many years of existence without incident or complaint.

In an attempt to arrive at a boundary, which will accommodate any concern regarding the War Memorial, will be easily recognisable to the public and not cause disruption to the electorate, Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council proposed the following as outlined in the attached plan:

- A continuation of the existing community boundary along the B4248, from its junction with footpath No. 338/16 in the direction of Brynmawr until its junction with Blaina Road.
- To continue in a southerly direction along Blaina Road to its junction with the access road to Lakeside Retail Park.
- To continue along the access road to its junction with the newly proposed footpath (Planning Application No. 2008/0291)
- The new footpath rejoins the existing boundary at the junction of cart-road / footpath 338/11 and Warwick Road.