

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD ON
12th JUNE 2008 AT CARADOG HOUSE, CARDIFF**

Commissioners

Mrs. S G Smith (Chair)
Mr P J Wood (Deputy Chair)
Rev H M Davies

Secretariat

Mr. E H Lewis (Secretary)
Mr. S R Halsall
Mr. D Carr
Mrs. Liza Brough
Mrs. Abbie Prescott-Bird

The Chair welcomed Mr Wood to the meeting and congratulated him on his appointment as member and chair designate to the Commission.

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 1.1 There were no new interests declared. The Commission noted that a list of Mr Wood's interests had been submitted to the Secretariat and the record of Members' Interests would be updated accordingly.

2. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

- 2.1 The Chair nominated Mr Wood as the new Deputy Chair, which was seconded by Rev. Davies. **It was agreed** that Mr Wood would be the new Deputy Chair.
- 2.2 The Chair nominated Rev Davies as the new Chair of the Audit committee, which was seconded by Mr Wood. **It was agreed** that Rev Davies would be the new Chair of the Commission's Audit Committee.

3. MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON 24th APRIL 2008

- 3.1 These were agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Anglesey Community Review

- 4.1 It was noted that the Commission was still awaiting a response from Canolfan Bedwyr regarding clarification on the validity of the prior Deputy Chair's instructions to the Commission's translators regarding work carried out on the Anglesey Final proposals report and any future translation work carried out for the Commission.

Risk Register – Transformation of the Commission's IT system

- 4.2 The Secretary reported that the Sponsor Division had become involved in trying to take forward the transformation of the Commission's IT equipment. **It was agreed**

that if no practical solution were apparent by the next Commission meeting then the Chair would write to the Minister.

Elections to Welsh Local Authorities

- 4.3 The Commission noted comments made by the Sponsor Division in their reply to Anglesey County Council regarding the timing of the Commission's publication of the Report and Proposals for the Anglesey Community Review. The Commission considered that as they had acted in accordance with advice received from their legal advisor the Sponsor Division's comments were inappropriate. **It was agreed** that, although the Commission would continue to follow legal advice, any future election periods would be factored into the review timetable were possible. **It was agreed** that this issue would be raised with the Minister at their next meeting.

Operational Plan

- 4.4 It was reported that the Operational Plan had been revised although no substantial changes had been made. **It was agreed** that the operational Plan would be included on the Agenda for the July meeting.

Community Reviews

- 4.5 It was reported that reviews had commenced for the communities in the County Boroughs of Blaenau Gwent and The Vales of Glamorgan.

5. MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2008

- 5.1 It was reported that the wording of the minutes for the February Commission meeting did not clearly reflect what had been agreed by Members in respect of the Caerphilly Community Review. **It was agreed** that the wording of the minutes would be changed to more accurately reflect the decisions made.

6. CONWY COMMUNITY REVIEW – DRAFT PROPOSALS REPORT

- 6.1 It was reported that a letter was sent to Conwy Community Council requesting further clarification as to the extent of the area of Marl Wood. A response had now been received by the Commission from Conwy Community Council who had clearly marked the extent of Marl Wood on the map provided by the Commission. The map indicated that the area of Marl Wood was greater than had been previously considered. **It was agreed** that it was desirable for the whole of the area of Marl Wood to be located in Conwy Community and that the Draft Proposals report would be amended accordingly.
- 6.2 It was reported that the Commission had received a further letter from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Conwy County Borough Council. The letter related to an email from Councillor Emlyn Thomas, County Borough Councillor for the Electoral Division of Trefriw, regarding Dolgarrog Community. The email stated that Cllr. Thomas had the opportunity during a Village Appraisal Day on 26 April 2008 in Trefriw to consult 150 to 200 residents regarding their views on the Commission's proposal to amalgamate Trefriw and Dolgarrog Communities. All

residents who completed the form said no to the proposal. Cllr Thomas also stated that any consultation on this matter conducted by the Commission for both Communities would result in the same response. It was also reported that the Commission had also obtained the results of the 1 May 2008 elections for Dolgarrog Community Council which showed only 6 of the 9 seats being filled. **It was agreed** that the Draft Proposal report would still include the proposal that Trefriw and Dolgarrog Communities should be merged but that existing Trefriw wards would be retained and that it would also be proposed that the existing Community of Dolgarrog form a ward in the new community.

7. CAERPHILLY COMMUNITY REVIEW – DRAFT PROPOSALS REPORT

- 7.1 The Commission noted Caerphilly County Borough Council's comments in respect of the suggested change to the boundary between the Communities of Crumlin and Penmaen, which had been received since the last meeting. Although the Council did not support the original suggestion they had put forward an alternative change which would result in a smaller area of Croespenmaen being transferred into Penmaen from Crumlin. **It was agreed** that although the Council's alternative boundary would be noted in the Draft Proposals Report and views sought on it no proposals for a change to the boundary between Crumlin and Penmaen would be made at this stage.
- 7.2 The Commission noted that Caerphilly County Borough Council did not support the suggested change to the boundary between the Communities of Argoed and Penmaen. As this suggested change had been noted in the Draft Proposals Report but was not being put forward as a proposal there was no action necessary other than to record the Council's objection in the text of the Report.
- 7.3 The Commission noted that Caerphilly County Borough Council did not support the suggested change to the boundary between the Communities of Blackwood and Penmaen. The Council considered that the increase in electors for Blackwood could result in an unacceptable increase in the workload for local councillors. The Commission considered that their proposed boundary was appropriate and well defined and that consequential changes to the community electorates should not determine whether or not a change to a boundary should be adopted if such a change appeared to them to be in the interests of effective and convenient local government. **It was agreed** that the Commission would retain their proposed change to the boundary between the Communities of Blackwood and Penmaen as part of their Draft Proposals.
- 7.4 The Commission noted Caerphilly County Borough Council stated that they did not object to the proposed changes to the boundaries between the Communities of Pengam, Maesycwmmmer, Pontllanfraith, Cefn Fforest, Caerphilly, Van and Risca. The Council's concern that the change to the boundary between the Communities of Pengam and Cefn Fforest could lead to some confusion over different police areas was noted, however, it was not considered that this issue would present any real difficulties should the boundary be changed.
- 7.5 **It was agreed** that the text of the Report would be amended to better reflect the criteria involved in determining whether a suggested change to a boundary would

be included in the report in order to encourage comments rather than as a proposed change.

- 7.6 It was noted that Caerphilly County Borough Council had not as yet provided the Commission with electoral statistics for the proposed boundary changes and therefore the Secretariat were unable to assess the consequential changes to the community electoral arrangements. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would chase up the electoral figures and report back to Members on any significant impact they may have on the Proposals. **It was agreed** that the Draft Proposals report would be adopted subject to the amendments discussed and receipt of the electoral figures from the Council.

8 BRIDGEND COMMUNITY REVIEW – DRAFT PROPOSALS REPORT

- 8.1 It was reported that the Commission had now received the Electoral figures for the areas where proposals for changes to community boundaries would affect electoral numbers. The Commission had initially agreed to realign the boundary between the Communities of Merthyr Mawr and Bridgend, so the area know as Island Farm Estate would be combined and transferred into Bridgend Community as initially suggested by Bridgend Town Council. The Commission were minded to combine the estate but the proposal would see the Community of Merthyr Mawr reduced to 145 electors, which raised the question of viability. An alternative proposal would be for the combined estate be transferred into Bridgend as initially proposed, but merge the Community areas of Laleston and Merthyr Mawr as they are currently combined in the electoral division of Bryntirion, Laleston and Merthyr Mawr. A further option would be to place the whole estate and a portion of land running adjacent to Merthyr Mawr from Bridgend Community in to Merthyr Mawr. **It was agreed** that a letter outlining the three options would be sent to Merthyr Mawr Community Council, Bridgend Town Council, Laleston Community Council and Bridgend County Borough Council asking for views on the suggested options.

9. POWYS – MERTHYR TYDFIL BOUNDARY REVIEW – FINAL PROPOSALS REPORT

- 9.1 It was reported that legal advice had been sought on the draft of the report and as a result several minor amendments had been made. The Commission noted the advice received. It was **agreed** that the report as it now stood would be published as the Final Report.

10. SWANSEA COMMUNITY REVIEW – DRAFT PROPOSALS REPORT

- 10.1 The Commission noted the representation received from Swansea City and County Council and a local councillor since the last meeting. It was noted that Swansea City and County Council had supported that Commission's proposed changes to the boundaries between the Communities of Cwmbwrla, Penderry, Gorseinon, Grovesend and Waungron, Llchwyr and Penllergaer and that the Council's comments, together with the local councillor's suggestions, had been incorporated into the Draft Proposals Report.

- 10.2 They considered the three suggested changes to the boundary between the Communities of Gorseinon and Llchwyr put forward by the local councillor. The first suggestion was similar to a proposal made by the Commission as part of their Draft Proposals but included the transfer of a larger area of Llchwyr into Gorseinon. It was noted that this extended area included dwellings which were accessed through the Community of Llchwyr whereas the Commission's proposal only included dwellings which could only be accessed through Gorseinon. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposal was preferable to the local councillor's suggestion and would be retained in the Draft Proposals Report.
- 10.3 The Commission noted the suggestion made by the local councillor for a change to the boundary between Gorseinon and Llchwyr in the vicinity of West Street. They considered that the suggested boundary did not appear to be a significant improvement on the existing boundary or that the existing boundary presented an anomaly but was rather in keeping with the general nature of the boundary between the Communities of Gorseinon and Llchwyr. **It was agreed** that the local Councillor's suggestion would not be proposed in the Draft Proposals Report.
- 10.4 The Commission noted the suggestion made by the local councillor for a change to the boundary between Gorseinon and Llchwyr in the vicinity of the former Bryngwyn steel works. It was reported that a site visit made by the Secretariat had confirmed that a significant amount of new developments had been recently built in the area both above and below the suggested boundary. The Commission noted that the current road layout in the new development area appeared to indicate that access to the new dwellings would most likely be from Gorseinon and it was therefore considered that the suggested boundary realignment would be inappropriate as it would result in a significant part of the new development being transferred into Llchwyr. **It was agreed** that the local Councillor's suggestion would not be proposed in the Draft Proposals Report. The Commission further noted that the area surrounding the site of the former Bryngwyn steel works was separated from the area of the new development by the River Lliw. The Commission considered that the boundary between the Communities of Gorseinon and Llchwyr should be realigned in this area to follow the River Lliw. **It was agreed** that this realignment of the boundary would be included as a proposal in the Draft Proposals Report.
- 10.5 **It was agreed** that the Draft Proposals report would be adopted subject to the amendments discussed and receipt of the electoral figures from the Council.

11. WREXHAM FURTHER REVIEW – CONSIDERATION OF INITIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND DRAFT PROPOSALS REPORT

- 11.1 The Commission considered the representations received in response to the initial stage of the further Wrexham Community Review. It was noted that all the representations received, with the exception of that received from Caia Park Community Council, objected to the inclusion of the whole of the Llwyn Onn estate within the Community of Caia Park. The Commission noted that Wrexham County Borough Council now supported the inclusion of the Llwyn Onn estate within the Community of Abenbury whereas they had formally not offered any objection to the proposal that Llwyn Onn be included in the Community of Caia Park.

- 11.2 The Commission considered that, whereas their original proposal had merit in that it included the Llwyn Onn estate within the Wrexham Town area, there were now significant factors against it, most notably the lack of support from Wrexham County Borough Council and the concerns raised over the viability of Abenbury Community should the Llwyn Onn estate be completely transferred out of it.
- 11.3 **It was agreed** that the Draft Proposals would propose that the whole of the Llwyn Onn Estate be included in the Community of Abenbury. **It was agreed** that in order to fully address the question of the future viability of the Community of Abenbury it would be proposed that the Community of Abenbury be merged with the Community of Isycoed.

12. REVIEWS TIMETABLE

- 12.1 The Commission discussed revisions to the Review Timetable and the following amendments were made:
- Caerphilly Community Review – The date for publication of Draft proposals Report extended to August 2008
 - Bridgend Community Review - The date for publication of Draft proposals Report extended to August 2008
 - Swansea Community Review - The date for publication of Draft proposals Report extended to August 2008

13. REPORTING OF PERSONAL DATA RELATED INCIDENTS

- 13.1 It was reported that this guidance on how to report personal data related incidents as part of the Management Commentary to the Annual Accounts had been issued by the Cabinet Office. The Commission held only small amounts of personal data electronically and did not have any incidents to report. The Commission noted the report.

14. FINANCE REPORT YEAR END 2007-08

- 14.1 The Commission noted the finance report and the situation at the end of 2007-08. It was noted that the reported underspend of £26,737 was close to the estimated underspend.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 15.1 It was noted that the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government had agreed to implement the recommendations of the Commission for changes to the community boundaries in Rhondda Cynon Taff, as set out in the Commission's submitted Report and Proposals.
- 15.2 It was noted that the Commission had received the Final Proposals report from Cardiff City and County Council in respect of their review of communities in their

authority area. **It was agreed** that the report would be placed on the agenda for the next Commission meeting.

- 15.3 The Secretary reported that the Commission had received a letter regarding the Welsh Language in Europe which invited comments from the Commission. The Commission noted the request and **it was agreed** the Secretary will reply thanking them for the letter, but saying that due to the Commission being an independent non-political body that it would not be appropriate for them to comment on issues which could have political implications.
- 15.4 The Commission requested that an update on the Annual Open Meeting be included on the agenda for the next Commission meeting. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would draft a progress report for the next meeting.
- 15.5 The Commission requested that the Secretariat prepare the necessary information and papers for the new Chair to be ready by the end of the current Chair's appointment. **It was agreed** that this would be prepared.
- 15.6 The Commission considered that it would be helpful if a plain language guide and glossary for community reviews could be drawn up. This could include comments and advice from One Voice Wales. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would draft a document to this effect.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 16.1 Dates for future meetings were as agreed as follows:

Wednesday 16th July 2008 at 10:45 a.m.

Monday 18th August 2008 at 10:45 a.m.

Tuesday 9th September 2008 at 10:45 a.m.

Thursday 16th October 2008 at 3:00 p.m.