

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD ON 18th AUGUST 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

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

1.1 There were no new interests declared.

2. MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON 12th JUNE 2008

2.1 These were agreed subject to requested changes.

2.2 **It was agreed** that the Secretary would clarify the Plain English standard for report writing and report back to the Commission at the October meeting. **It was agreed** that the arrangements would be made for Secretariat staff to attend a suitable minute writing course to update their skills and to make sure best practice is being used.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Anglesey Community Review

3.1 The Secretary reported that a response from Canolfan Bedwyr had now been received which had endorsed 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. **It was agreed** that a letter would be sent to Canolfan Bedwyr thanking them for their help with this matter.

Transformation of the Commission's IT system

3.2 The Secretary reported that the transformation of the Commission's IT system would be carried out on the 4th September. The Commission noted that a few other software issues were still being discussed.

Elections to Welsh Local Authorities

3.3 The Secretary reported that the issue of Election periods affecting the review timetable had been put on the agenda for the Members meeting with the Minister as agreed at the last meeting.

Operational Plan

- 3.4 The Commissioners noted the updated Operational Plan as previously circulated to them.

Community Reviews

- 3.5 It was reported that the Caerphilly Community review draft proposals report had been sent to the legal advisor for his comments, which had been incorporated into the report. The outstanding electoral statistics had been received from Caerphilly County Borough Council and consequential changes had been made to the electoral arrangements of some of the communities. A copy of these changes was tabled for Members' approval. **It was agreed** that the draft proposals report would be published as soon as possible.
- 3.6 It was reported that the Swansea Community review draft proposals report had been sent to the legal advisor his comments, which had been incorporated into the report. The outstanding electoral statistics had been received from Swansea City and County Council and consequential changes had been made to the electoral arrangements of some of the communities. A copy of these changes was tabled for Members' approval. **It was agreed** that the draft proposals report would be published as soon as possible.
- 3.7 It was noted that it was unlikely that the Commission's report on the Community Review carried out by Cardiff City and County Council would be finished in time for the September Commission meeting as the deadline date for representations set by the Council was 1 September 2008. It was expected that this report would be presented to the October Meeting.
- 3.8 **It was agreed** that the Secretary would incorporate the need to look at community electoral arrangements in the briefing paper for the Minister.

4. WREXHAM FURTHER COMMUNITY REVIEW

- 4.1 The Commission considered the representations received in response to the Draft Proposals Report. It was noted that the majority of the representations received objected to the merger of the communities of Abenbury and Isycoed. The Commission had considered the viability of Isycoed Community Council, given its low electorate and had originally proposed the amalgamation of this Community with the Community of Abenbury. This was to "future proof" the viability of small communities such as Isycoed. However it was noted that the representations received were of the view that the Community Council operated well and had strong support from its residents. **It was agreed** that the Communities of Abenbury and Isycoed would not be merged.
- 4.2 The Commission noted the objection raised by Caia Park Community Council to the transfer of Llwyn Onn into the Community of Abenbury. The Council pointed out that realigning the boundary between their community and Abenbury to follow the Abenbury Road would result in the transfer of Pentre Gwyn Community Centre and playing field out of their community area. They pointed out that they paid a sum annually to Wrexham County Borough Council as a contribution to the maintenance of the Community Centre and to safeguard its future. The Commission noted however that the Community Centre and playing fields were vested with Wrexham

County Borough Council and could be used by residents of either Community. **It was agreed** that the Llwyn Onn estate would be moved from Caia Park to Abenbury with the boundary following the Abenbury Road.

- 4.3 **It was agreed** that the Final Report would be drafted and sent to the legal advisor and sent to Members at the same time.

5. **BLAENAU GWENT COMMUNITY REVIEW – INITIAL REPRESENTATIONS**

Abertillery - Nantyglo and Blaina

- 5.1 It was reported that Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council had suggested a change to the boundary between their community and that of Nantyglo and Blaina so as to include the whole of the settlement of Bournville is within their area. The Council had suggested no specific boundary and therefore the Secretariat had plotted a suggested realignment utilising the course of the Ebbw Fach river. This included all the streets mentioned by the Council within the Community of Abertillery and Llanhilleth. Nantyglo and Blaina Community Council had made a counter-suggestion that included the whole of the settlement of Bournville within their community area. Again no boundary had been specified and therefore the Secretariat had plotted a suggested realignment. The Commission considered that the boundary suggested by Abertillery and Llanhilleth appeared preferable. This affected fewer properties and followed for the most part the clearly defined course of the Ebbw Fach river. **It was agreed** that the Commission would put forward as a draft proposal the suggestion made by Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council subject to a site visit by the Secretariat to confirm that the boundary was suitable.

Beaufort

- 5.2 It was reported that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council had asked that the Commission consider an anomaly in the boundary between the Communities of Beaufort and Brynmawr in the area of Twyncynghordy Road. This anomaly involved a single residential property and appeared to be easily rectified by realigning the boundary around the perimeter of that property. **It was agreed** that this realignment would be considered during the Secretariat's site visit and proposed if found to be suitable.
- 5.3 The Commission noted 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 co-terminous with the local government electoral divisions. A strict application of the rules governing principal area electoral reviews in future would leave the Commission with 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, an alternative would be to create three new communities from the existing Community of Beaufort, namely the Communities of Badminton, Beaufort and Rassau. **It was agreed** that the

Commission would propose that Community of Beaufort should be dissolved and three new Communities Badminton, Beaufort and Rassau be created following the existing electoral division boundaries, depending on the Secretariat's site visit to see if they would make suitable community boundaries.

Brynmawr

- 5.4 It was reported that Brynmawr Town Council had suggested a change to the boundary between their area and the Community of Nantyglo and Blaina to incorporate a large number of residential properties within their community. The Commission noted that the only access to these properties was through Nantyglo and Blaina and therefore the suggested boundary was not ideal. Nantyglo and Blaina Community Council had made a counter-suggestion that would move a smaller area from Nantyglo and Blaina into Brynmawr and incorporate the Blaenant Industrial Estate, Brynmawr Primary School and Healthcentre within their community. It was noted that this suggested realignment would remove Brynmawr Primary School and Health Centre from the Brynmawr area. **It was agreed** that the Commission would propose a modified version of the suggestion made by Nantyglo and Blaina which re-aligned the community boundary to the south of Brynmawr Primary School therefore keeping Brynmawr Primary School and Health Centre within the Brynmawr area. **It was agreed** that this realignment would be considered during the Secretariat's site visit and if the boundary was a suitable one.

Cwm and Ebbw Vale

- 5.5 It was reported that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council suggested consideration be given to the boundary between Ebbw Vale and Cwm Communities. The boundary is clearly anomalous as it divided several properties and the Council had proposed that it be realigned to follow an adjacent road. However, it was noted that this suggested realignment did not include several properties to the west, which were only accessed through the Community of Cwm. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would look at whether the suggested boundary could be extended to include these properties within Cwm.
- 5.6 It was 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 co-terminous with the local government electoral divisions. An alternative would be to create two new communities from the existing Community of Ebbw Vale, namely the Communities of Ebbw Vale North and Ebbw Vale South. **It was agreed** that the Commission would propose that the Community of Ebbw Vale should be dissolved. Two new Communities Ebbw Vale North and Ebbw Vale South would be created following the existing electoral division boundaries, subject to the Secretariat's site visit to check that they would make suitable community boundaries.

Tredegar

- 5.7 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council had suggested some changes to the Central, West and Georgetown community ward boundaries of the Community of Tredegar. **It was agreed** that the Commission would suggest in their Draft

Proposals that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council consider reviewing the community wards for Tredegar Community Council.

6. VALE OF GLAMORGAN COMMUNITY REVIEW – INITIAL REPRESENTATIONS

Barry

- 6.1 The Commission noted the suggestion by the Chair of Vale of Glamorgan Conservatives that the area of Pencoedtre be constituted as a separate Ward in the Community of Barry. The Secretariat also noticed an anomaly in the Community Ward Boundary close to Barry Waterfront. It was agreed that these change and any other changes that have been suggested to community electoral arrangements that may not be considered as consequential changes under this review would be highlighted within the report for consideration by the Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council.

Wenvoe

- 6.2 The Commission noted the suggestion by the Chair of Vale of Glamorgan Conservatives that an additional ward be set up in Wenvoe Community. It was agreed that this and any other changes that have been suggested to community electoral arrangements that may not be considered as consequential changes under this review be highlighted within the report for consideration by the Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council.

Ewenny

- 6.3 The Commission noted the suggestion by Ewenny Community Council and a local resident that the boundary of Ewenny be re-aligned to follow the Vale Railway line. It was noted however, that this re-alignment involved a change to the boundary between the County Borough of Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan and therefore fell outside the scope of the current review.

Llandough

- 6.4 The Commission noted the suggestion from Llandough Community Council that the property known as Croft Mawr be moved into Michaelston Community Council area. It was noted that the only access to the property was from Michaelston. It was agreed that the boundary be re-aligned to move the property from Llandough into Michaelston.

Llanmaes

- 6.5 The Commission noted the suggestion from Llanmaes Community Council to re-align the boundary between their community and Llantwit Major to follow the B4265 road at Boverton. It was noticed however, that the Council's suggested boundary omitted two properties to the south west of Llanmaes. It was therefore agreed to propose in the draft proposals report extending the boundary further west along the B4265 to include these properties within the Community of Llanmaes.

Llantwit Major

- 6.6 The Commission noted the suggestion made by Llantwit Major Town Council that the representation of the Boverton Ward of their community be increased. The Commission considered that this change might be proposed as a consequential change because of the proposed change to the boundary between Llantwit Major and Llanmaes. It was agreed to ask for the electoral figures for the affected area from Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council.

Penarth

- 6.7 The Commission noted the suggestion made Penarth Town Council that the boundary between their Community and the Community of Sully be re-aligned to move properties in Whitcliffe Drive from Sully into Penarth. It was agreed that this suggestion be adopted for the draft report.
- 6.8 It was also noted that there was a further anomaly in the boundary between the Communities of Sully and Penarth in the area of Merlin Close and Brockhill Way. It was agreed that this suggestion be adopted for the draft report.
- 6.9 It was noted that Penarth Town Council had suggested a change to the Community boundary at Cosmeston Lakes. However the Secretariat, on producing a map of the area found a discrepancy between the description by Penarth Town Council and the actual map. The Secretariat sent a map to Penarth Town Council for further explanation. Penarth Town Council, on receipt of the map discovered that their mapping was out of date and confirmed that the Secretariat mapping was right and no change was required.

Pendoylan

- 6.10 The Commission noted the suggestion made by Pendoylan Community Council to move three properties from Welsh St Donats into Pendoylan. It was not clear from the Councils representation where the properties were located and the Secretariat was awaiting confirmation from the Council about this.

St Athan

- 6.11 The Commission noted the suggestion by St Athan Community Council that the level of representation in the St Athan Ward be cut and that the representation in the Flemingston Ward be increased. It is suggested that this change and any other changes that have been suggested to community electoral arrangements that may not be considered as consequential changes under this review are highlighted within the report for consideration by the Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council.

St Brides Major

- 6.12 The Commission noted the many representations received in support of the suggestion that the Ogmere by Sea Ward of the Community of St Brides Major should form a Community in its own right, which could include the Southerndown area of the St Brides Major Ward. The Commission were concerned that this proposal would involve the creation of two small Communities, which may raise

questions about the viability of maintaining two community councils. The Commission were not persuaded at this stage by the arguments put forward in the representations that it would be in the interests of effective and convenient local government to form a new Community from the Ogmore by Sea ward. **It was agreed** that further consideration would be given to this proposal.

Wick

- 6.13 The Commission noted the suggestion made by Wick Community Council to re-align the boundary between their Community and the Community of St Brides Major. It was not clear from the Councils representation where the re-aligned boundary should be drawn and the Secretariat was awaiting confirmation from the Council about this.

7 BRIDGEND COMMUNITY REVIEW – MERTHYR MAWR

- 7.1 It was reported that replies had now been received from Bridgend Town, Merthyr Mawr and Laleston Community Councils about the three options presented by the Commission for a change to the boundary. Bridgend Town considered that the option to include Island Farm estate within their Community to be the best option. Merthyr Mawr and Laleston Community Councils considered that residents would be best served by the suggestion to re-align the boundary along the road to the north of Island Farm estate. **It was agreed** that the Commission would adopt the suggestion to re-align the boundary between Merthyr Mawr and Bridgend town along the road to the north of Island Farm estate in their draft proposals report.

8. ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

- 8.1 **It was agreed** that the Annual Report would be translated and published as soon as possible.

9. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY

- 9.1 The Secretary reported that the Commission's Remit Letter from the Sponsor Division had required that the Commission draw up a Sustainable Procurement policy. This had now been drafted with help from the Environment Agency. The Commission were also making progress with Investors in People (IIP) that linked in with this policy. It was hoped that an action plan would be sent to the Welsh Assembly Government before January 2009.
- 9.2 The Commission noted the progress made towards fulfilling this obligation. It was agreed that a progress report be submitted to a future meeting.

10. FINANCE REPORT – FIRST QUARTER 2008-09

- 10.1 It was reported that the Commission's budget for the first quarter of 2008-09 was underspent and that it was likely that the budget would be underspent at the end of 2008-09. The sponsor division had been told of the estimated year end budget

situation. It was noted however that the Commission would be charged for the forthcoming IT transformation shortly to be carried out by Merlin and that the exact charge for this work was not yet known.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 11.1 The Chair reported that she had attended the launch of a Report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation at which the Minister had spoken.
- 11.2 The Secretary reported that the Welsh Language Board had accepted the Commission's annual Welsh Language report and praised the Commission for their continuing implementation of their Welsh Language scheme.
- 11.3 The Secretary reported that the Wales Audit Office staff would come to the September Commission meeting to discuss their recent work for the periodic review of the Commission. **It was agreed** that the Commission would enquire whether it would be possible to include a review of the opinions of the Commission's customers as part of this.
- 11.4 The Secretary reported that a date of 5 September 2008 had been agreed for a meeting of AGSBs at the Commission's offices. **It was agreed** that the Deputy Chair would also attend this meeting with the Chair and Secretary.
- 11.5 A draft agenda for Members' forthcoming meeting with the Welsh Assembly Local Government Minister had been circulated to Members.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

Tuesday 9th September 2008 at 10:45 a.m.
Thursday 16th October 2008 at 3:00 p.m.
Wednesday 26th November 2008 at 10:45 a.m.