

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 17th JUNE 2009 AT CARADOG HOUSE, CARDIFF.**

Commissioners

Mr P J Wood (Chairman)
Rev. H M Davies (Deputy Chairman)
Mr J Bader (Member)

Secretariat

Mr. E H Lewis (Secretary)
Mr. S Halsall
Mr. D Carr
Mrs. A Prescott-Bird

Members congratulated Rev. Davies on his reappointment as Deputy Chairman.

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 1.1 There were no new interests declared. The Chairman declared an interest in agenda item 7, Neath Port Talbot Electoral Review, as his wife was a Community Councillor for Crynant Community. **It was agreed** that it would not be necessary for the Chairman to withdraw from the discussion.

2. MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON 12th MAY 2009

- 2.1 These were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Management Statement and Financial Memorandum

- 3.1 The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) was currently with the Commission's Sponsor Division being adapted to suit the Commission. It was expected that the final MSFM was be ready for signing soon.

Conferences

- 3.2 The Commission's Information Leaflet had been approved by the Plain English Campaign and been given the Crystal Clear mark. The Leaflet was now with the printers.

Video Conferencing

- 3.3 Discussions with the Museum for Wales on shared Video Conferencing facilities had been ongoing and a decision was imminent.

Electoral Reviews Guidance Booklet

- 3.4 The Welsh Assembly Local Government Minister's letter to the Commission would be included in the Electoral Reviews Guidance Booklet for the next print run.

Annual Workshops

- 3.5 The Secretariat was making arrangements for the Workshops and had booked the venues and interpreters.

Inter-Commission Liaison Meeting

- 3.6 The Boundary Commission for Scotland had suggested that the next Inter-Commission meeting be held during the week commencing 19 April 2010.

4. BLAENAU GWENT COMMUNITY REVIEW – CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT REPRESENTATIONS

Beaufort – Badminton, Beaufort and Rassau

- 4.1 The Commission noted the representations received from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council agreeing with the Commission's proposal to dissolve the Community of Beaufort and create three new Communities of Badminton, Beaufort and Rassau. The Council considered, however, that the existing ward boundary should be retained for the middle part of the proposed boundary between the new communities of Badminton and Beaufort. **It was agreed** that the Commission would retain their proposal for the Community of Beaufort to be dissolved and three new communities of Badminton, Beaufort and Rassau created. **It was agreed** that the Commission would accept Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's suggestion that the existing ward boundary be retained for the middle part of the boundary between the proposed communities of Badminton and Beaufort.

Beaufort and Brynmawr

- 4.2 The Commission noted the support for this proposal from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposed boundary to move Amberleigh House from the Community of Brynmawr into the Community of Beaufort would be retained for the Final Proposals.

Tredegar

- 4.3 The Commission noted the support from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council for the suggested change to the boundary between the Central and West and Sirhowy Wards of the Community of Tredegar. The Council also stated that they considered that the suggested change to the boundary between the Central and West and Georgetown Wards of the Community of Tredegar at Vale Terrace should be subject to the views of the inhabitants of the affected properties. However, both of these suggested community ward boundary changes had been put forward by the Commission in the Draft Proposals for the consideration of Blaenau Gwent County Borough who could, if they wished to do so, make the changes as part of a review of the electoral arrangements of the Community of Tredegar. **It was agreed** that the Commission would suggest in their Final Proposals that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council consider undertaking a review of the electoral arrangements for Tredegar Community Council.

Abertillery and Nantyglo and Blaina

- 4.4 The Commission noted the support from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council for the proposed boundary change to transfer Bournville from the Community of Nantyglo and Blaina into the Community of Abertillery. They also noted the objection to this proposal from Nantyglo and Blaina Community Council who considered that the existing boundary was not a cause for dispute. However, the Commission considered that the existing boundary was anomalous and that it would be in the interests of effective and convenient local government for the whole area of Bournville to be within the same community. As the majority of the dwellings were currently in the Community of Abertillery it was considered that it would make sense for the whole area to be included in this community. It had been pointed out in one of the representations that the old Glanyrafon school yard to the north of the proposed boundary should be included in the area to be transferred into the Community of. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would undertake a site visit to the area to determine whether the school yard should be included in the proposal and that Members would permit the Secretariat to make a decision on this matter. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposed boundary would be retained for the Final Proposals subject to the Secretariat's decision whether or not to include the old Glanyrafon school yard.

Brynmawr and Nantyglo and Blaina

- 4.5 The Commission considered the representations supporting their proposal from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Nantyglo and Blaina Community Council and the objection from Brynmawr Community Council and their support for their original proposal that would see the transfer of the Lakeside housing development into Brynmawr. In the Draft Proposals report it was considered that as the only access to the Lakesides housing development was through Nantyglo and Blaina, this indicated that the properties were appropriately included within the Nantyglo and Blaina Community. Having considered the representations the Commission remained of the view that the existing boundary in this area is appropriate in terms of effective and convenient local government and made no proposals for change to this part of the boundary. The Draft Proposal also considered the boundary between the Communities of Brynmawr and Nantyglo and Blaina to the East of the Lakeside area the boundary in this area was no longer clearly defined. A boundary was proposed that was considered to be appropriate in terms of being clearly defined and including areas together that are homogenous. Having considered the representations the Commission remain of the view that the change proposed would be desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposed boundary would be retained for the Final Proposals.

Ebbw Vale and Cwm

- 4.6 The Commission noted the representation supporting their proposal from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposed boundary would be retained for the Final Proposals.

Ebbw Vale

- 4.7 The Commission noted the representation supporting their proposal from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposed boundary would be retained for the Final Proposals.

5. VALE OF GLAMORGAN COMMUNITY REVIEW – CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 The Commission noted the representations received in response to the Draft Proposals report.

Llandough and Michaelston

- 5.2 The Commission noted the representation supporting their proposal from Llandough Community Council. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposed boundary would be retained for the Final Proposals.

Llanmaes and Llantwit Major

- 5.3 The Commission noted the representation supporting their proposal from Llantwit Major Town Council and also noted the representation from an individual who owns a property in Llanmaes objecting to the proposal. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposed boundary would be retained for the Final Proposals.

Penarth and Sully

- 5.4 No additional representations were received and **it was agreed** that the Commission's proposed boundary would be retained for the Final Proposals.

Pendoylan and Welsh St Donats

- 5.5 The Commission noted the representation supporting their proposal from Welsh St Donats Community Council. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposed boundary would be retained for the Final Proposals.

St Bride's Major

- 5.6 The Commission noted the many representations received regarding St Bride's Major and consideration was taken of all representations covering for and against the splitting of the community. It was suggested that a lot of the issues mentioned in representations to split the community were not within the remit of the Community Council to rectify, and problems that required the intervention of other agencies would benefit from a larger, stronger Community Council representing the people. The community as a whole was not deemed to be large in area, and although St Bride's Major was not at the sea edge, it was not a distant and remote village cut off from Ogmores by Sea and Southerndown. The evidence and implications have been considered and **it was agreed** that it would not be in the interests of effective and convenient local government for such a change to be made.

Barry

- 5.7 The Commission noted the representation supporting their proposal from Barry Town Council and the information provided by Cllr Barry Shaw listing additional anomalies to ward boundaries within the Barry Town Council area. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposal that The Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council consider a review of the community wards for Barry Town Council would be retained for the Final Proposals.

Ewenny

- 5.8 The Commission noted the further representation from Ewenny Community Council proposing a further review of the boundary between the County Borough of Bridgend and the County Borough of The Vale of Glamorgan. **It was agreed** that the Commission's proposed wording in the draft report highlighting that such a review would be out of the remit of the community boundary review would be retained for the Final Proposals.

6. NEWPORT ELECTORAL REVIEW – CONSIDERATION OF INITIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND SCHEMES

- 6.1 The Commission noted the initial representations received and draft schemes formulated by the Secretariat. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would produce two more schemes in order to see whether it would be possible to further improve democratic parity.

7. NEATH PORT TALBOT ELECTORAL REVIEW – CONSIDERATION OF INITIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND SCHEMES

- 7.1 The Commission noted the initial representations received and draft schemes formulated by the Secretariat. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would produce two more schemes in order to see whether it would be possible to further improve democratic parity and variance from the 1:1,750 ratio.

8. DENBIGHSHIRE ELECTORAL REVIEW – CONSIDERATION OF INITIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND SCHEMES

- 8.1 The Commission noted the initial representations received and draft schemes formulated by the Secretariat. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would produce two more schemes in order to see whether it would be possible to further improve democratic parity and variance from the 1:1,750 ratio.

9. ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC

- 9.1 The Commission considered that the most effective way to engage with the public about the electoral reviews would be to issue a press statement at the Draft Proposals stage of the reviews. **It was agreed** that the Commission would draft press statements for the first four reviews and that for the remaining reviews the press statement would be drafted for Member's consideration along with the draft proposals schemes. **It was agreed** that separate press statements would be

drafted, one covering the whole electoral review and another for each county's electoral review. These would be issued to both local and national media with the widest distribution possible.

- 9.2 **It was agreed** that a short script would be drafted for radio 'sound bites' and that Members would be nominated to be a spokesperson for each review area with the Chair as the lead for national review issues and the Secretariat for local review issues. **It was agreed** that the Secretariat would seek advice from press officers of other AGSBs and request assistance.

10. REVIEWS' PROGRESS

10.1 An outline of the current situation was given to Members. It was expected that:

- Draft Proposals Reports for the Newport, Neath Port Talbot and Denbighshire electoral reviews would be presented to the July Commission meeting;
- Schemes for the Flintshire and Rhondda Cynon Taff electoral reviews would be presented to the August meeting;
- Schemes for the Anglesey electoral review would be presented to the August meeting;
- Final Proposals Report for the review of the boundary between Powys and Mid Glamorgan would be published by the end of June;
- Final Proposals Report for the Caerphilly Community Review would be published in early July;
- Further Draft Proposals for the Swansea Community Review would be published in early July;
- A draft of the Final Proposals Report for the Blaenau Gwent Community Review would be presented to the July meeting; and
- A draft of the Final Proposals Report for the Vale of Glamorgan Community Review would be presented to the July meeting.

10.2 It was noted that the start of the Swansea electoral review would need to be moved back to allow for the additional time taken by the Swansea Community Review Further Draft Proposals. **It was agreed** that the reviews timetable would be updated to reflect such changes and that the amended timetable would be presented to the July meeting.

11. WALES AUDIT OFFICE REPORT – IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

11.1 Members noted the position on the implementation of the Wales Audit Office Report recommendations. It was considered that the Strategic Plan required a timetable. **It was agreed** that the Strategic Plan would be launched during the autumn and discussed at the Commission's annual workshops.

11.2 It was noted that further progress had been made in respect of communicating with stakeholders as the Commission would have stands at the forthcoming Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales annual conferences.

12. FINANCE REPORT – YEAR END 2008-09

- 12.1 Members noted the situation at the end of the 2008-09 financial year. It was reported that the under-spend had been larger than anticipated due to the costs of Welsh Assembly IT transformation being less than estimated.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 13.1 Members considered that the recent trial of an electronic news agency service had proved to be of limited use to the Commission due to the very low volume of news items regarding local authority boundaries. **It was agreed** that the Commission would not buy this service.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 14.1 The dates of the next meeting were set at:

Wednesday 15th July 2009 at 9:00 a.m.

Tuesday 11th August 2009

Thursday 17th September 2009

Wednesday 7th / 8th October 2009

Tuesday 24th November 2009

Wednesday 16th December 2009