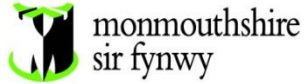


Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 25 March 2025

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held at **Steve Greenslade Room, County Hall, Usk** on **Wednesday, 2nd April, 2025**, at **4.30 pm**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To consider the following reports (Copies attached):
 - i. **Electoral Review Consultation Response** 1 - 4
Wards Affected: All
Purpose: To approve a response to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales in relation to their electoral review programme.
Author: John Pearson, Local Democracy Manager
Contact Details: johnpearson@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	<p>Leader Lead Officers – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse, Peter Davies, Will Mclean</p> <p>Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation, including DDAT Relationships with Welsh Government, UK Government and local government associations Regional Relationships including CJsCs. PSBs and cross boarder Emergency Planning</p>	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	<p>Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader Lead Officers – Will McLean, Craig O'Connor</p> <p>Economic Strategy Skills and Employment Replacement Local Development Plan Placemaking and the development of market and affordable housing Placemaking and Transforming Towns Car parking and civil parking enforcement Development Management Building Control</p>	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Ben Callard	<p>Cabinet Member for Resources Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Matt Gatehouse</p> <p>Finance including MTFP and annual budget cycle Revenue and Benefits Human resources, payroll, health and safety Land and buildings Property maintenance and management Strategic procurement</p>	Llanfoist & Govilon
Martyn Groucutt	<p>Cabinet Member for Education Lead Officers – Will McLean, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs/inclusion Post 16 and adult education School standards and improvement</p>	Lansdown

	<p>Community learning Sustainable communities for learning Programme Youth service School transport</p>	
Ian Chandler	<p>Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Children’s services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending service Adult services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental health Wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision</p>	Llantilio Crossenny
Catrin Maby	<p>Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment Lead Officers – Debra Hill-Howells, Craig O’Connor, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Decarbonisation Transport Planning Highways and MCC Fleet Waste management, street care, litter, public spaces and parks Pavements and Back lanes Flood Alleviation Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and River health</p>	Drybridge
Angela Sandles	<p>Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement Lead Officers – Matthew Gatehouse, Ian Saunders, Jane Rogers, James Williams</p> <p>Community development, inequality and poverty (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation and cost of living crisis) Citizen engagement and democracy promotion including working with voluntary organisations Citizen experience - community hubs, contact centre, and customer service and registrars, communications, public relations and marketing Leisure centres, play and sport Public conveniences Electoral Services and constitution review Ethics and standards Welsh Language Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Public Protection, and Licencing</p>	Magor East with Undy

Sara Burch	Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism Lead Officers – Craig O'Connor, Ian Saunders Local Food production and consumption, including agroforestry and local horticulture Homelessness, Temporary accommodation, private sector housing, (empty homes leasing schemes, home improvement loans, disabled facilities grants and adaptive technology), Allocation of social housing Broadband connectivity Active Travel Countryside Access and Rights of Way Tourism Development and Cultural Services	Cantref
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Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

To become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

Objectives we are working towards

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in;
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued;
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.



Subject: Response to Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales Consultation on Electoral Review

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 2 April 2025

Divisions/Wards Affected: All

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve a response to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (The Commission) in relation to their electoral review programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Cabinet approve the consultation response included at appendix 1 to the report as the Councils submission to the Commission.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The Commission are required to complete an electoral review of all local authorities in Wales on a 10 year rolling programme. The last electoral review was completed in advance of the 2022 local elections with the changes proposed as part of that review taking effect at those elections. Monmouthshire was the last local authority to have its electoral review completed under that review due to the completion of the community review the Council was undertaking at that time.

3.2 The Commission have confirmed that they will begin their next rolling programme of electoral reviews and have published a consultation paper which sets out the parameters that they have considered in reaching a range on the number of councillors that each local authority should aim to have as part of this review.

3.3 Factors such as population, population sparsity, rurality and deprivation have been taken account of as part of the calculations. For Monmouthshire, this results in a range of councillors between 41 and 48 and the consultation asks for responses to include the preferred number of Councillors that each local authority should have and provide details on the governance arrangements of the Council and why the proposed number would be sufficient.

3.4 The Democratic Services Committee met on the 10th March 2025 to consider the consultation paper and put forward recommendations to Cabinet to include in a response to the consultation. In summary, the committee's findings were;

- Disappointment at the short time scale for the consultation and lack of opportunity to gather evidence from existing councillors to make an informed decision.
- Without the evidence and particularly given how soon the recent electoral review was completed and those recommendations still embedding, the committee were reluctant to offer an ideal figure on the Council size but were content with the methodology used by the Commission in reaching its recommended range of councillors.

- With that in mind, the Committee are content with the proposed range of councillors and request that when the electoral review commences, flexibility is given to the final number of councillors within that range to ensure the proposals best reflect the ideal local arrangements.
- The Committee would like to see single member wards as the preferred option over multi member wards accepting that in some instances there may be a need for multi member wards.
- The Committee could not reach a consensus on the use of Welsh only ward names with bilingual ward names being the preferred option and local flexibility to in those naming arrangements once the wards are identified.
- In response to the future governance arrangements to be provided as evidence, the committee noted it is difficult to provide that information in the short space of time and that some of the decisions on leadership sit with the leader and not opposition councillors. The Committee were keen however to reinforce that the political balance of the Council can impact significantly on the effectiveness of the Council the outcome of which obviously won't be known until after the election.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Providing no response to the consultation could lead to arrangements for the Council being proposed that do not suit local arrangements.
- 4.2 Submitting a response to the Commission will ensure that the authority has a say in the proposals that are put forward as part of the electoral review programme.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Administration costs associated with an electoral review are the responsibility of The Commission.

10. CONSULTEES:

- Democratic Services Committee

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Policy and Practice Documents for 2025 Electoral Review Programme](#)

12. AUTHORS:

John Pearson, Local Democracy Manager

13. CONTACT DETAILS:

Email: johnpearson@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru
4th Floor
Welsh Government Building
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

County Hall
The Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

The person dealing with this matter:
E-mail:
johnpearson@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Date: 2 April 2025

Dear Sir / Madam

Consultation Response – 2025 Electoral Review

I write in response to the consultation currently being undertaken in relation to the Council size policy for the forthcoming 2025 electoral review programme.

The Councils Democratic Services Committee met to consider the proposals contained in the policy documents and made recommendations to cabinet which were endorsed at its meeting on the 2nd April 2025 as a response on behalf of the local authority.

The Council acknowledges the response template that the Commission requested was used in submitting responses to the consultation but do not have enough information from its members given the short consultation timescales to respond in the level of detail requested. That said, the Council will provide evidence based responses on the topic areas requested as part of the full electoral review for Monmouthshire and provide evidenced arguments in favour or against specific proposals.

The Council would also like to make the Commission aware that the political balance of the Council will significantly impact on how the council operates and the number of councillors that should be available to effectively run it. Clearly, the political balance of a Council will not be known until after an election at which these changes take effect so it is impossible to predict what the future arrangements would be. Just as one example however in a tightly balanced council, if you remove the number of councillors in Cabinet positions from the controlling group they would have significantly less members available to them to take up positions on other committees, that are required to be politically balanced and some of which cabinet members are not allowed to be members of, compared to the second largest group.

At this stage, the Council would like to respond the consultation and provide the following views on behalf of the Council.

- 1) The Council is not at this stage in a position to provide the Commission with an evidence based argument for a specific number of councillors as requested as part of the consultation, particularly given the short consultation period. Additionally, having

reviewed the current and future forecast electorates, there are areas that have significant change that fall outside the criteria that the Commission are setting particularly in relation to the 20% variance of the Council average and these will need reviewing as part of the electoral review. However, the Council is content with the methodology used to identify the range of councillors that Monmouthshire could be allocated in the next electoral review and request that flexibility will be given to the council to provide evidenced based arguments for a specific number of councillors within that range as part of the full electoral review.

- 2) The Council wish to see a preference for single member wards to be put forward where possible as it ensures clear accountability for residents.
- 3) The Council could not reach a consensus on the preference for Welsh only ward names but a bilingual approach was the preferred option with the Council retaining flexibility in putting forward suitable names that identify the ward or area locally.

Yours sincerely

Angela Sandles
Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement