

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
REPORT**

<p>SUBJECT: Electoral Review – Draft Proposals Consultation Response MEETING: Full Council DATE: 14th January 2021 DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All</p>
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1. PURPOSE:

To consider submitting representation to The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (“The Commission”) in response to their Electoral Review – Draft Proposals Report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That members approve the response at Appendix A, as agreed by the cross party working group for the electoral review, to be submitted to the Commission as a full council response for their consideration into the future electoral arrangements for Monmouthshire.

3. BACKGROUND:

3.1 Section 21(3) of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 provides that the Commission in carrying out its duties must seek to ensure effective and convenient local government. This is the paramount and primary function of the Commission and one of the duties provided for by the Act is the conduct of reviews of the electoral arrangements of principal areas.

3.2 Section 29 of the Act puts a duty upon the Commission to review the electoral arrangements for each principal area including:

- The total number of councillors to be elected to the council
- The number and boundaries of the electoral wards
- The number of councillors to be elected for each electoral ward in the principal area, and
- The name of any electoral ward

3.3 Section 30 of the Act requires the Commission to:

(a) seek to ensure that the ratio of local government electors to the number of members of the council to be elected is, as nearly as may be, the same in every electoral ward of the principal area; and

(b) have regard to:

- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries for electoral wards which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (ii) the desirability of not breaking local ties when fixing boundaries for electoral wards.

3,4 The Commission gave notice of the commencement of their electoral review for Monmouthshire on the 7th July 2020 inviting representations from stakeholders as to how the future arrangements in Monmouthshire may look. Full Council on the 16th July 2020 approved

a scheme to be submitted to the Commission as prepared by the Councils cross party working group for the electoral review.

- 3.5 The Commission published their draft proposals for the review on the 10th December 2020. Political group leaders and members of the working group met with the Commission on the 15th December 2020 to discuss and understand the content of the draft proposals.
- 3.6 The working group met on the 5th January 2020 to consider the draft proposals for the review and agree a draft response (attached at Appendix A) to be considered by full council and to be submitted to the Commission as part of their consultation exercise into the draft proposals.
- 3.7 The County Councillors for Thornwell and St Christophers ward were also in attendance at that meeting to offer details of an alternative proposal for the south of Chepstow. In considering the detail, the working group are happy to support the proposals put forward by the two members who will be submitting their own response to the Commission with the full details of their proposal.
- 3.8 Any individual member or political group is able to respond to the Commission independently and in addition to the Council response. The attached response takes account of the County area as a whole so individual members or groups have different views for their own wards are able to submit their own views independently. The Commission also requested to receive representation in support of their proposals so if a member or group is satisfied with the proposals for their area they should submit their own representation to the Commission stating so.

4. Options Appraisal

Agree a response to be submission

In approving this response the Council will ensure that the Commission is aware of the views of the Council for all electoral wards and provides further views for their consideration in determining the final proposals. Councillors and political groups are encouraged to respond to the Commission independently either in support or offering alternative proposals for their areas to ensure the Commission have as many responses as possible.

Do not agree a response for submission

If Council cannot agree a response then it will not collectively be submitting representation to the Commission for their consideration and will not be making clear to the Commission a view that is desirable for the future electoral arrangements of the area.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications resulting from this decision although any agreed increase in the number of elected members would require

funding at the rates determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales who set the level of remuneration councillors are entitled to.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

The electoral review will aim to ensure that as near as practicable, each vote cast at a County Council election carries the same weight and ensure electors have an equitable level of representation on the Council.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS:

All elected members will be required to undertake the necessary safeguarding and corporate parenting training necessary to their role within the Council.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Monmouthshire Electoral Review | LDBC \(gov.wales\)](#)

9. AUTHOR:

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