

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
REPORT**

SUBJECT: Electoral Review Consultation
MEETING: Democratic Services Committee
DATE: 10 March 2025
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To consider a response to the consultation from the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission Wales (The Commission) regarding its Council Size Policy to be used at Electoral Reviews.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Democratic Services Committee debate and consider a response to the consultation to be forwarded to Cabinet for approval.
- 2.2 To delegate final approval of the recommendations to the chair of Democratic Services Committee to forward on to Cabinet following the meeting.

3. REASONS:

- 3.1 The Commission are required to keep under review the electoral arrangements of each local authority in Wales and do so by carrying out electoral reviews periodically. The '2025 programme' requires The Commission to have completed a cycle of electoral reviews within 12 years starting from the 30 September 2023.
- 3.2 An electoral review will consider;
- The number of members of the Council for a local authority
 - The number, type and boundaries of electoral wards in to which the local authority is divided for the purpose of the election of councillors
 - The number of councillors to be elected for any electoral ward
 - The name of any electoral ward
- 3.3 Prior to the commencement of an electoral review, The Commission are required to consult on its intended procedure and methodology for the review and is doing so through the consultation on its Council Size policy. (The policy)
- 3.4 The policy is attached at appendix 1 of this report and a summary of the general principles of the policy is detailed below;

- A desire of having the same, or nearly the same, ratio of local government electors to councillors in every electoral ward with consideration of a five year forecast in changes to the electorates
- A desire to achieve a level of variance that is not greater than 20% of the council average
- Special geographical considerations including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of an electoral ward
- Consideration of any local ties that would be broken by changes to the electoral arrangements
- A view to making recommendations for electoral arrangements that will achieve effective and convenient local government and be internally coherent, with reasonable road links across the ward so it can be easily traversed and all electors can engage in community affairs and activities without needing to travel through an adjoining ward.
- Where multi-member wards are proposed it is not desirable to have more than 4 elected members per ward.
- In light of The Commissions duty to promote the use of Welsh language, a preference will be for wards to bear a single name in the Welsh language which is acceptable for use in English and will consult with the Welsh Language Commissioner with regards to the ward names.

3.5 More specifically for Monmouthshire, the Policy also sets the ideal size of the Council and the methodology used in calculating that figure. It is proposed that the electoral review for Monmouthshire will return between 41-48 councillors compared to the 46 councillors that currently represent the County.

3.6 The current and forecast electorates are included at appendix 2 of this report. The current electorate is 75,172 and with 46 councillors gives an average councillor:elector ratio of 1,634. The five year forecast for the electorate is 79,710 and will return a councillor:elector ratio of 1,661 based on 48 councillors as proposed in the report.

3.7 Previously, the commission have banded the electoral wards depending on the scale of variance to the average for the County. This is also highlighted in appendix 2 and includes a RAG rating depending on the level of variance and likely need for the wards to change based on the application of the Policy to the current arrangements. The consultation for this review aims to achieve a maximum variance of +/-20% of the average councillor:elector ratio.

3.8 In considering the response to the consultation, the Commission has provided a template response format which covers various aspects of the governance arrangements of the Council and why the proposed arrangements would not be suitable for the Council. Factors such as the effectiveness of scrutiny arrangements and quasi judicial committees, size of the cabinet, community leadership and councillor casework will need to be provided as evidence to support why the proposed arrangements are not suitable.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 Resources and costs relating to the electoral review will largely be met by The Commission. There will be significant officer time spent in assisting The Commission with the dissemination of information, reviewing the arrangements and drafting proposals to respond to the consultation, as well as implementing the final proposals.
- 4.2 Increases in the number of councillors will require further funding to remunerate the councillors at the level set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales at the time of the review being implemented.

5. CONSULTATION:

Political Group Leaders
Relevant Cabinet Member

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[2025 ERP: Draft Policy and Practice | DBCC](#)

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