

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](#)

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