

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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