

Report

Democratic Services Committee

Part 1

Date: 20th February 2020

Item: 7

Subject **Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales Review of Electoral Arrangements for the City of Newport**

Purpose To consider the Draft Proposals issued by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales for the revised Electoral Arrangements for Newport and make recommendations to Council regarding a response to the statutory consultation.

Author Head of Law and Regulation

Ward All Wards

Summary The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales is reviewing the electoral arrangements for the City of Newport with a view to considering and formulating proposals for future arrangements. This is part of the Commission's programme to review all principal councils in Wales, in time for new arrangements to be introduced for the next local government elections in 2022. Newport is the 17th council to be reviewed.

The Commission published initial consultation documents on 30th January 2019, showing the current elector to Councillor ratios in the City and how these compare to their Council Size Policy and ideal ratios. A cross-party working group was set up to review the evidence and options for future electoral arrangements in Newport, and formulate a draft response to the Commission's initial consultation process. The group's final report was presented to full Council on 30th April 2019, when the recommendations were approved and adopted. The Council's proposals and preferred options were then submitted to the Commission for consideration.

The Commission's Draft Proposals were then finalised in October 2019 but not published until January 2020. The Council has until 8th April 2020 to formulate and submit any response to the draft proposals. The Commission will then consider any consultation responses before finalising their proposals, which will be submitted to the Welsh Government Ministers for approval, with or without modification. The necessary Order will then be made to implement the new electoral arrangements prior to the next local government elections in May 2022.

In summary the draft proposals would establish a Council of 49 Members and 22 Wards, compared to the current 50 Members and 20 Wards.

The Communities of Wentlooge and Coedkernew would be moved from the current Marshfield Ward and merged with the existing Tredegar Park Ward to form a new Tredegar Park and Marshfield East Ward. The new Ward would have 2 Members, while the remainder of Marshfield would have 1.

Part of the existing community of Graig would be merged with the Community of Rogerstone. The existing Rogerstone Ward would be divided into three new Wards with 4 members between them.

Part of the existing community of Pillgwenlly would be transferred to Stow Hill, both Wards retaining 2 Members each.

The Community of Bishton would transfer from Llanwern to Langstone. The Community of Nash would transfer from Liswerry to Llanwern with representation unchanged.

The wards of Bettws and Beechwood would remain unchanged but membership would be reduced from 3 members to 2 in each ward.

Proposal To make recommendations to Council regarding a response to the Draft Proposals issued by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales for the revised Electoral Arrangements for Newport.

Action by Head of Law and Regulation

Timetable Immediate

This Report was prepared after consultation with:

- Chief Executive
- Leader of the Council
- Head of Finance
- Head of People and Business Change

Background

1. The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales is reviewing the electoral arrangements for the City of Newport with a view to considering and formulating proposals for future arrangements. This is part of the Commission's programme to review all principal councils in Wales, in time for new arrangements to be introduced for the next local government elections in 2022. Newport is the 17th council to be reviewed.
2. The Commission published initial consultation documents on 30th January 2019, showing the current elector to Councillor ratios in the City and how these compare to their Council Size Policy and ideal ratios. This policy places Newport in Category 2, with a Council Size Aim of 49 Councillors in total. Currently Newport has 109,423 electors and a membership of 50 - an average of one councillor to 2,188 electors. Applying the council size aim of 49 Councillors will result in a ratio of one councillor to 2,233 electors.

3. Statutory Framework

The Commission's role in reviewing electoral arrangements is set out in the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013. Its primary function in reviewing electoral arrangements is to seek to ensure "effective and convenient local government" - this was further described by the Commission in its presentation to Council as "coherent electoral wards with common interests and good internal communications links".

Electoral arrangements are defined in the Act as:

- (a) the total number of Members on the Council;
- (b) the number, type and boundaries of the electoral wards;
- (c) the number of Councillors for each electoral ward;
- (d) the names of electoral wards.

4. Through the review, the Act requires the Commission to:
 - (a) seek to ensure that the ratio of electors to Councillors is, as nearly as may be, the same in every electoral ward;
 - (b) foster community identity by
 - (i) Fixing boundaries that are easily identifiable
 - (ii) Not breaking local ties
 - (c) take account of
 - (i) any discrepancy between the number of electors and the number of people eligible to vote;
 - (ii) any change to the number or distribution of electors in the next five years
5. The existing communities and community wards are the building blocks for electoral wards. There is also the power to amend communities / community wards as a consequence of changes to electoral wards, but this must be put forward at draft proposal stage to allow for the proper consultation on changes to a community.
6. The Commission's preference is for single member wards, but multi-member wards (up to three members) will be considered in cases supported by evidence to the character of the ward, or in the interests of electoral parity. Wards with more than three members will only be considered if this is the existing pattern and there is substantial evidence of local support for such a ward.

7. Council proposals.

A cross-party working group was set up to review the evidence and options for future electoral arrangements in Newport, and formulate a draft response to the Commission's initial

consultation process. The group's final report was presented to full Council on 30th April 2019, when the following recommendations were approved and adopted:-

- (a) **Recommendation 1:** To support the minor amendments to the ward boundaries to address the anomalies set out in the report.
 - (b) **Recommendation 2:** To move Llanwern Community into Ringland.
 - (c) **Recommendation 3:** To create two new wards of Rogerstone West community ward (two Councillors) and combining Rogerstone North and East community wards (two Councillors);
 - (d) **Recommendation 4:** To add the "Riverside" area of Pillgwenlly to Stow Hill
 - (e) **Recommendation 5:** To add St Brides and Coedkernew Community Wards to Tredegar Park;
 - (f) **Recommendation 6:** To retain three Councillors in Beechwood;
 - (g) **Recommendation 7:** To retain three Councillors in Bettws
 - (h) **Recommendation 8:** To retain four representatives in Lliswerry, and agree the English spelling for this ward as Lliswerry and not Liswerry.
8. The Council's preferred options were submitted to the Commission for consideration, together with the other consultation responses. The Commission's Draft Proposals were then finalised in October 2019 but not published until January 2020. The Council has until 8th April 2020 to formulate and submit any response to the draft proposals. The Commission will then consider any consultation responses before finalising their proposals, which will be submitted to the Welsh Government Ministers for approval, with or without modification. The necessary Order will then be made to implement the new electoral arrangements prior to the next local government elections in May 2022.
9. **The Draft Proposals for the revised Electoral Arrangements for Newport.**

In summary the draft proposals would establish a Council of 49 Members and 22 Wards, compared to the current 50 Members and 20 Wards.

- (a) The Communities of Wentlooge and Coedkernew would be moved from the current Marshfield Ward and merged with the existing Tredegar Park Ward to form a new Tredegar Park and Marshfield East Ward. The new Ward would have 2 Members, while the remainder of Marshfield would have 1.
 - (b) Part of the existing community of Graig would be merged with the Community of Rogerstone. The existing Rogerstone Ward would be divided into three new Wards with 4 members between them.
 - (c) Part of the existing community of Pillgwenlly would be transferred to Stow Hill, both Wards retaining 2 Members each.
 - (d) The Community of Bishton would transfer from Llanwern to Langstone. The Community of Nash would transfer from Liswerry to Llanwern with representation unchanged.
 - (e) The wards of Bettws and Beechwood would remain unchanged but membership would be reduced from 3 members to 2 in each ward.
10. The Commission's draft proposals to change the arrangement of electoral wards are intended to achieve a significant improvement in the level of electoral parity across the City of Newport. The

Commission proposes a council of 49 members, a reduction from the current size of 50. This results in a proposed average of 2,233 electors per member. This would create 22 electoral wards, an increase from 20 existing wards.

11. The largest under-representation (in terms of electoral variance) within the proposals are **Beechwood, Bettws and Tredegar Park and Marshfield East** (23% above the proposed county average). At present the greatest under-representation is in **Tredegar Park** (48% above the proposed county average). The largest over-representation (in terms of electoral variance) within the proposals is **Shaftesbury** (18% below the proposed county average). At present the greatest over-representation is in Stow Hill (26% below the proposed county average).
12. The Commission is proposing 18 multi-member wards in county consisting of: 10 two-member electoral wards; seven three-member electoral wards; and, one four-member electoral ward. The Commission has proposed no changes to nine electoral wards.
13. The Commission received consultation representations from Newport City Council, two community councils, one county councillor, Newport City Council Labour Group, Newport East Labour Party and two members of the public.

14. Retained wards

The Commission has considered the electoral arrangements of the existing electoral wards and the ratio of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected. It is proposed that the existing arrangements should be retained within the following nine electoral wards.

- Allt-yr-yn
- Alway
- Caerleon
- Gaer
- Malpas
- Ringland
- Shaftesbury
- St Julians
- Victoria

The only proposed variance is the Welsh electoral ward name for St. Julians. The Commission propose the Welsh language name of **Sain Silian** based on The County Borough of Newport (Electoral Changes) Order 2002, and retain the English language name of **St Julians**. The Welsh Language Commissioner considered the name and is in agreement with the proposed Welsh language name.

15. Graig and Rogerstone.

The existing Graig electoral ward is comprised of the Community of Graig. It has 4,842 electors (5,383 projected) represented by two councillors which is 8% above the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an estimated population of 4,723 eligible voters. The existing Rogerstone electoral ward is comprised of the Community of Rogerstone. It has 8,859 electors (9,322 projected) represented by three councillors which is 32% above the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an estimated population of 8,290 eligible voters.

16. The Commission received five representations concerning these wards from: Newport City Council, Newport City Council Labour Group, Newport East Labour Party, a resident of Allt-yr-yn and a resident of Rogerstone. The Council had recommended that two new wards be created: Rogerstone West (with two councillors) and combining Rogerstone North and East community wards to create another two-member ward. However, the Council had considered an alternative option of three new wards of: Rogerstone West (two councillors), Rogerstone North (one councillor) and Rogerstone East (one councillor).

17. The Commission proposes that the area of Afon Village should be combined with the West ward of the Community of Rogerstone to form an electoral ward of 5,064 electors which, represented by two ward councillors. They consider that the area has no communication links to the remainder of the Graig ward without going through the Community of Rogerstone. It is the view of the Commission that these arrangements best address the existing inappropriate levels of electoral variance whilst creating easily identifiable boundaries. This would result in a level of representation that is 13% above the proposed county average.
18. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward the Welsh language name of **Gorllewin Tŷ-du**; and the English language name of **Rogerstone West**. The Welsh Language Commissioner is in agreement with the proposed name. The Commission are open to any suggestions for alternative names.
19. The Commission proposes that the East ward of the Community of Rogerstone form an electoral ward of 2,365 electors (2,308 projected) represented by one councillor, which would result in a level of representation that is 6% above the proposed county average. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward the Welsh language name of **DwyrainTŷ-du** and the English language name of **Rogerstone East**. The Welsh Language Commissioner is in agreement with the proposed name.
20. As a consequence, the Commission proposes that the North ward of the Community of Rogerstone should form an electoral ward of 2,423 electors (2,375 projected) represented by one councillor, would result in a level of representation that is 9% above the proposed county average. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward the Welsh language name of **GogleddTŷ-du**; and the English language name of **Rogerstone North**. The Welsh Language Commissioner is in agreement with the proposed name.
21. The Commission proposes that, following the transfer of Afon Village to Rogerstone West the remainder of the Community of **Graig** should form an electoral ward of 3,849 electors which, if represented by two councillors, would result in a level of representation that is 14% below the proposed county average. The name would remain the same.

22. **Marshfield and Tredegar Park**

The existing Marshfield electoral ward is composed of the Communities of Coedkernew, Marshfield, Michaelstone-y-Fedw and Wentlooge. It has 4,718 electors (5,172 projected) represented by two councillors which is 6% above the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an estimated population of 5,013 eligible voters.

23. The existing Tredegar Park electoral ward is comprised of the Community of Tredegar Park. It has 3,310 electors (3,666 projected) represented by one councillor which is 48% above the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an estimated population of 3,437 eligible voters.
24. The Commission received four representations concerning this ward from: Newport City Council, Newport City Council Labour Group, Newport East Labour Party and a resident of Allt-yr-yn.
37. Newport City Council recommended that the Community of Tredegar Park be combined with the St Brides ward of the Community of Wentlooge and the Community of Coedkernew to form a two-member ward. The remainder of Marshfield would form a single member ward.
25. The Commission proposes that the Communities of Coedkernew, Tredegar Park and Wentlooge be combined to form an electoral ward of 5,497 electors (6,051 projected) represented by two councillors, which would result in a level of representation that is 23% above the proposed county average.

26. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward the Welsh language name of **ParcTredegar a Dwyrain Maerun**; and the English language name of **Tredegar Park and Marshfield East**. The Welsh Language Commissioner is in agreement with the proposed name.

27. The Commission recognises that Tredegar Park has a unique identity, however, they do not consider it appropriate for it to retain such a significant level of under-representation and alternative arrangements need to be considered. The Commission agrees with the recommendation the Council and the improvement in electoral parity. However, the Commission considered that it was not necessary or desirable to split St Brides from the Community of Wentlooge.

28. Therefore, the Commission, proposes that the Communities of Marshfield and Michaelstone-y-Fedw be combined to form an electoral ward of 2,531 electors (2,787 projected) represented by one councillor, which would result in a level of representation that is 13% above the proposed county average. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward the Welsh language name of **Gorllewin Maerun**; and the English language name of **Marshfield West**. The Welsh Language Commissioner is in agreement with the proposed name.

29. **Pillgwenlly and Stow Hill**

The existing Pillgwenlly electoral ward is comprised of the Community of Pillgwenlly. It has 5,099 electors (8,902 projected) represented by two councillors which is 14% above the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an estimated population of 6,134 eligible voters. The existing Stow Hill electoral ward is comprised of the Community of Stow Hill. It has 3,290 electors (4,499 projected) represented by two councillors which is 26% below the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an estimated population of 4,122 eligible voters.

30. The Commission received four representations concerning this ward from: Newport City Council, Newport City Council Labour Group, Newport East Labour Party and a resident of Allt-yr-yn. The Council recommended that an area described as 'Riverside' on the eastern boundary of Pillgwenlly be transferred to the Community of Stow Hill. However, the Council also considered the alternative option of transferring the Mon Bank development into Stow hill.

31. The Commission has agreed with the alternative option considered by the Council, namely that the Mon Bank development be combined with the Community of Stow Hill to form an electoral ward of 4,101 electors, represented by two councillors, which would result in a level of representation that is 8% below the proposed county average. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward the single name of **Stow Hill**, based on The County Borough of Newport (Electoral Changes) Order 2002. The Welsh Language Commissioner is in agreement with the proposed name.

32. As a consequence, the Commission proposes that the remainder of the Community of Pillgwenlly form an electoral ward of 4,288 electors, represented by two councillors, which would result in a level of representation that is 4% below the proposed county average. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward the Welsh language name of **Pilgwenlli**; and the English language name of **Pillgwenlly**, based on The County Borough of Newport (Electoral Changes) Order 2002. The Welsh Language Commissioner is in agreement with the proposed name.

33. **Langstone, Liswerry and Llanwern**

34. The existing Langstone electoral ward is composed of the Communities of Langstone, Llanvaches and Penhow. It has 3,750 electors (4,039 projected) represented by two councillors which is 16% below the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an estimated population of 3,883 eligible voters. The existing Liswerry electoral ward is composed of the Communities of Liswerry and Nash. It has 9,176 electors (11,445 projected) represented by four councillors which is 3% above the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an

estimated population of 10,028 eligible voters. The existing Llanwern electoral ward is composed of the Communities of Bishton, Goldcliff, Llanwern and Redwick. It has 3,180 electors (14,283 projected) represented by one councillor which is 42% above the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an estimated population of 2,805 eligible voters.

35. The Commission received seven representations concerning this ward from: Newport City Council, Llanwern Community Council, Nash Community Council, Cllr Martin Kellaway (Llanwern), Newport City Council Labour Group, Newport East Labour Party and a resident of Allt-yr-yn. The Council recommended that the Community of Llanwern be combined with the Community of Ringland to remain a three-member ward. The remaining Communities of Bishton, Goldcliff and Redwick would form a single-member ward.
36. The Commission proposes that the Communities of Bishton, Langstone, Llanvaches and Penhow are combined to form an electoral ward of 5,279 electors (6,037 projected), represented by two councillors, which would result in a level of representation that is 18% above the proposed county average. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward the Welsh language name of **Trefsgob a Langstone**; and the English language name of **Bishton and Langstone**. The Welsh Language Commissioner is in agreement with the proposed name. The Commission would welcome any suggestions for alternative names.
37. As a consequence, the Commission proposes that the Communities of Goldcliff, Llanwern, Nash and Redwick are combined to form an electoral ward of 1,861 electors (12,539 projected) represented by one councillor, which would result in a level of representation that is 17% below the proposed county average. The Community of Nash has been included within Llanwern because it shares a common identity with established community, communication and social links within the area. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward the Welsh language name of **Llan-wern**; and the English language name of **Llanwern**, based on The County Borough of Newport (Electoral Changes) Order 2002. The Welsh Language Commissioner recommended the single name of *Llan-wern*.
38. It was not considered appropriate to include the Community of Llanwern with Ringland as it was mixing two areas which do not have a shared identity and are bisected by the A48. Furthermore, the projected very large increase in electorate for Llanwern would result in the two areas being separated in a future electoral review as the area would not be sustainable with three-members, nor would the creation of a future five- or six-member ward be appropriate. The Commission considers that the proposed electoral wards shares a common identity and would provide for an effective electoral ward which would build on the established community, communication and social links within the area. If the electorate for this ward increases to the level projected, then it would be appropriate to add members to this ward only. Providing a longer term and more sustainable solution to the existing and future electorate for the area.
39. The Draft Proposals acknowledge that this does not resolve the electoral inequality that will be created by the projected increase of 11,000 electors in the Community of Llanwern. However, the Commission felt that establishing a separate electoral ward for Llanwern provided opportunities for more flexibility in the future.
40. The Commission considered adding an additional member to the proposed Llanwern electoral ward but this would create a current adverse variance of some 50% of the proposed county average. The Commission believes that a more suitable solution would be for the Council to carry out a community review of the area once the developments are completed. Such a review can be used by the Council to propose consequential changes to the electoral wards as a consequence of redrawing the community boundaries in the area, including an increase to the number of members needed. Alternatively, the Commission could review the electoral arrangements of Newport City Council at the start of the next electoral review programme which will commence in 2023. New arrangements would then be in place for the 2027 local government elections.

41. As a consequence, it is proposed that the Community of Liswerry forms an electoral ward of 8,966 electors (11,191 projected) represented by four councillors, which would result in a level of representation that is nine electors above the proposed county average. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward the single name of **Liswerry**, based on The County Borough of Newport (Electoral Changes) Order 2002. The Council suggested a single name of Lliswerry for the electoral ward. The Welsh Language Commissioner recommended the Welsh language name of *Llyswyry*.

42. **Bettws and Beechwood**

The existing Bettws electoral ward is comprised of the Community of Bettws. It has 5,480 electors (6,332 projected) represented by three councillors which is 18% below the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an estimated population of 6,221 eligible voters. The existing Beechwood electoral ward is comprised of the Community of Beechwood. It has 5,485 electors (6,154 projected) represented by three councillors which is 18% below the proposed county average. The electoral ward has an estimated population of 6,029 eligible voters.

43. The Commission received four representations concerning this ward from: Newport City Council, Newport City Council Labour Group, Newport East Labour Party and a resident of Allt-yr-yn. The Council recommended that both wards retain three-members, citing the number of unregistered adults in Bettws as a reason for over-representation and stating that it would be untenable to represent Beechwood with just two-members.

44. The Commission proposes that both Bettws and Beechwood are reduced to two-member wards. The Community of Bettws would form an electoral ward of 5,480 electors (6,332 projected) represented by two councillors (a reduction of one), which would result in a level of representation that is 23% above the proposed county average. It suggests that the Community of Beechwood forms an electoral ward of 5,485 electors (6,154 projected) represented by two councillors (a reduction of one), which would result in a level of representation that is 23% above the proposed county average

45. The Commission has given the proposed electoral ward of Bettws the Welsh language name of *Betws*; and the English language name of **Bettws**, based on The County Borough of Newport (Electoral Changes) Order 2002. The Welsh Language Commissioner recommends a single name of *Betws*. The ward name of **Beechwood** remains unchanged.

46. It is the view of the Commission that these arrangements best address the projected inappropriate levels of electoral variance whilst meeting the council size aim for the review.

47. **Minor Amendments to ward boundaries**

It its recommendations and proposals to the Commission, the Council include a number of proposed changes to existing ward boundaries to correct historical anomalies. The Commission have not considered it appropriate to include these changes within the review as they do not materially affect electoral variances. They consider that it is more appropriate for the Council to make these changes as part of a community review. However, because of the timescales for conducting a community view, it would not be possible to complete this in time for the changes to be introduced prior to the 2022 local elections. Therefore, the Commission have suggested that the Council defer its community review until after the next elections.

Financial Implications

48. Any increase or decrease in the overall number of Councillors in the final proposals of the Commission will impact on the number of allowances drawn from Members Allowances budget, the levels of which are externally set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Risks

49. There are no specific risks arising from the draft proposals. However, if there are concerns about any of the proposals and, in particular, about under-representation in Bettws and Beechwood as a consequence of the proposed reduction in ward councillors from three to two, then the Council has the opportunity to make representations to this effect as part of the statutory consultation.

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

50. This is a statutory review by the independent Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, aiming to improve electoral parity between the different parts of the City.

Proposal

51. To consider the Draft Proposals issued by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales for the revised Electoral Arrangements for Newport and make recommendations to Council regarding a response to the statutory consultation.
52. The Council has the option of not making any further representations at this stage, but there is the opportunity to raise any concerns about any of the proposals and, in particular, about under-representation in Bettws and Beechwood as a consequence of the proposed reduction in ward Councillors from three to two. The original Council recommendations stated that the representation in these wards should be retained as three members because of social and economic disadvantage and problems within the communities which generates additional work for their elected representatives and also, in relation to Bettws, the fact that there are large numbers of people who are not registered on the electoral register.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

53. There are no direct budget impacts of responding to this Consultation. Any increase/decrease in Member numbers will have budget impact coming from allowances paid and support costs such as IT provision etc. These will need to be assessed and built into budgets when final recommendations are known.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

54. Set out in the Report

Staffing Implications: Comments of Head of People and Business Change

55. The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales Review of Electoral Arrangements for the City of Newport details an approach to a statutory consultation and as a result there are no human resource implications. In responding to the consultation the Council will be able to provide feedback on how the proposals further develop the Well-being of Future Generations Act well-being goals, as they apply to citizens and communities within Newport. Newport City Council has provided population estimates to support this process and more data can be accessed to support the Committee and the Council in this exercise.

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

56. Not applicable

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

57. Not applicable

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

58. This is a statutory review being carried out by the Boundary Commission, and supports the Wellbeing Goal “A Wales of Cohesive Communities” within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Background Papers

Policies and other background documents and final reviews published on the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales’ website at <https://ldbc.gov.wales/>

Report to Council 30th April 2019.

Dated: 13th February 2020.