



COUNCIL – 5TH MARCH 2019

SUBJECT: ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CAERPHILLY

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To establish a working group to draft proposals to be submitted to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales as part of the Electoral Review of the County Borough.
- 1.2 To inform members of the timetable for the review.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales are reviewing the electoral arrangements for the county borough. The objective of the review is to seek 'electoral parity' while considering levels of non-registration and population changes over the next 5 years. The review will have regard to local community ties and will endeavour to fix boundaries for wards that remain easily identifiable.
- 2.2 An initial 12 week consultation period will commence shortly (following this meeting). At the end of this period any proposals that are developed by the working group will be considered by Council prior to submission to the Commission.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To note the outline timetable for the review and agree that a member / officer working group consisting of the following be established:-
 - Cllr David Poole, Leader of Council plus 3 further members of the Labour group
 - Cllr Colin Mann, Leader of Plaid Cymru plus 1 further member of the Plaid group
 - Cllr Kevin Etheridge, Independent group
 - Mr Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer
 - Mr David Beecham, Electoral Services Manager
- 3.2 For the working group to report its proposals to the meeting of council on 4th June for council's endorsement. The proposal to be sent to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, by 5th June, for its consideration.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To allow the Council to develop and help shape future electoral arrangements in the county borough.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2013 requires the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales to publish a 10 year programme of electoral reviews. On 23rd June 2016 the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government published a written statement asking the Commission to restart its 10 year programme with a new timetable with an expectation that all 22 electoral reviews be completed in time for the 2022 Local Government Elections.

5.2 The Cabinet Secretary agreed to the Commission's proposed timetable and Caerphilly was placed eighteenth in the programme beginning March 2019.

5.3 Prior to this meeting of Council the Commission met with Group Leaders and Officers (4th February, 2019) to explain the process and timetable for the review. A meeting between the Commission and Town and Community Councils is set for the 13th March.

5.4 At this point it is only possible to provide the following outline timetable:-

Stage 1 – Review announced 6th March, 2019 followed by a 12 week consultation period. During this time the Commission will be seeking initial views from interested parties and it is in this period that the Council may draft its own proposal. The deadline for the Council to submit any proposals is 5th June.

Stage 2 – The Commission will consider and develop any proposals submitted to them and publish draft proposals in the Winter of 2019 or early 2020 (to avoid consulting over the Christmas period). At this point the Commission will seek a further meeting with group leaders which will lead into a further 12 week statutory consultation period.

Stage 3 – The draft proposals will represent the Commission's initial views on Caerphilly's electoral arrangements and they will welcome any representations. These will be considered before the Commission formulate their final proposals and submit them to Welsh Government.

Stage 4 – Welsh Government will consider the Commission's proposals and may allow some very minor changes (during the Autumn 2020). If approved the Welsh Government will make an Order in time for the changes to be implemented for the 2022 Local Government Elections.

5.5 As part of the methodology for their review the Commission have developed and published a Council size policy. This identifies that the number of Councillors for Caerphilly should be 60. However, to protect against the impact that such a significant change would have this has been 'constrained' to 66. During the initial meeting with group leaders the Commission expressed a willingness to engage with the Authority and consider slight variances to this number as long as 'electoral parity' is achieved.

5.6 Conclusion

Stage 1 allows the Council to develop and submit its own proposals using the local knowledge of members. It is therefore recommended that a member/officer working group be established that can develop a proposal for consideration and acceptance by Council.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 There are no assumptions in this report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 This report deals with a statutory requirement for the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission to review electoral arrangements in Wales and does not link with Council policies.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 This report supports the Wellbeing Goal 'A Wales of cohesive communities' within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The review is being carried out by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission and is a statutory requirement with no equalities implications.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no financial implications of this report.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no personnel implications contained in this report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 The Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2013.

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Consultees: Group Leaders, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Governance, and the interim Chief Executive