

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) ACT 2015

Directions to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales 2016

In exercise of the powers conferred on them by sections 16 to 18 of the Local Government (Wales) Act 2015⁽¹⁾, and having consulted the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales and any association appearing to them to be representative of local authorities, the Welsh Ministers give the following Directions to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

Title and commencement

1.—(1) The title of these Directions is the Directions to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales 2016.

(2) These Directions come into force on the day after the date on which they are made.

Interpretation

2. In these Directions—

“the Commission” (“*y Comisiwn*”) means the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales;

“initial reviews” (“*adolygiadau cychwynnol*”) means the reviews to which paragraph 3 refers; and

“particular characteristics of an area” (“*nodweddion penodol ardal*”) include the density of its population, the mixture of Welsh and English speaking communities, within it, its geography and the levels of poverty within it.

Initial reviews

3. The Welsh Ministers direct the Commission to conduct an initial review of the following proposed principal areas⁽²⁾, described by reference to the existing principal areas comprised within them, which

(1) *[The statute number will be inserted once the Bill receives Royal Assent].*

(2) The proposals published by Welsh Ministers on 17 June 2015 include two options for the North Wales region, which result in either two or three proposed principal areas.

are proposals published by the Welsh Ministers on 17 June 2015⁽¹⁾.

(1) —

- (a) The counties of Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd, and the county borough of Conwy;
- (b) The counties of Denbighshire and Flintshire, and the county borough of Wrexham;

(2) —

- (a) The counties of Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd;
- (b) The county borough of Conwy, and the county of Denbighshire;
- (c) The county of Flintshire, and the county borough of Wrexham;

(3) —

- (a) The counties of Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire;
- (b) The county of Swansea, and the county borough of Neath Port Talbot;
- (c) The county boroughs of Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil;
- (d) The county boroughs of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan; and
- (e) The county of Monmouthshire and the county boroughs of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Torfaen and Newport.

Date of report

4. The Welsh Ministers direct the Commission to—

- (a) make and submit to the Welsh Ministers a report containing recommendations from the Commission in relation to each initial review to which these Directions relate, by 31 July 2018; and
- (b) publish a timetable for the programme of those reviews within the period of two months following the coming into force of these Directions.

General Directions

5. The Welsh Ministers direct the Commission to have regard to—

- (a) the particular characteristics of an area and the extent to which those characteristics should influence the size of the ward and the number of electors within it;

⁽¹⁾gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2015/lfuture/?lang=en.

- (b) the following principles—
 - (i) existing electoral wards should be grouped together in groups of two or more to create proposed electoral wards;
 - (ii) a Welsh language name for each electoral ward should be recommended and, where there is not a generally accepted Welsh language name for an electoral ward, an English language equivalent should be recommended;
 - (iii) the number of councillors for a proposed principal area should be no smaller than the number produced by a councillor to elector ratio of 1:4000; and
 - (iv) the number of councillors for a particular proposed principal area should be no smaller than the number of councillors for another proposed principal area which has a smaller electorate.

Leighton Andrews
Minister for Public Services, one of the Welsh
Ministers

Date



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.gov.wales

Welsh Government

Consultation Document

Draft Directions to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales

Date of issue: 17 August 2015

Action required: Responses by 9 November 2015

Overview

We are seeking your views on the Draft Directions to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission Wales.

As part of its programme of local government reform, the Welsh Government will require the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission Wales to conduct reviews of electoral arrangements for proposed new local authority areas.

This consultation seeks your views on the detail of the Draft Directions, including thoughts on council size and the ratio of electors for each elected member.

How to respond

Please respond using the form at the end of the document and either send in hard copy to the address below or by email to: RLGProgramme@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

If you are sending your response by email, please mark the subject of your e-mail: Directions to the LDBCW Consultation

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

Contact details

For further information:

Reforming Local Government Programme
Welsh Government
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

email: RLGProgramme@wales.gsi.gov.uk

telephone: 029 2082 6202

Data protection

How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full.

Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

Introduction

The purpose of this consultation is to seek views on the Draft Directions to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (“the Commission”).

The Local Government (Wales) Bill 2015 is currently being considered by the National Assembly for Wales. The provisions of the Bill allow for preparatory work to enable a programme of local government mergers and reform. This includes giving the Welsh Ministers powers to direct the Commission to conduct initial reviews of the electoral arrangements for the proposed new local authority areas.

The map of proposed new local authority areas, including the two options for North Wales, was published by the Minister for Public Services on 17 June and it forms the basis of the Draft Directions to the Commission. We are not, in this consultation, seeking views about the map. That opportunity will arise during a consultation on a Draft Local Government Bill planned for the autumn.

Directions to the Commission

Following this period of consultation and the enactment of the Bill, the Minister for Public Services will issue a further draft of the Directions for a short formal consultation. Once final Directions are issued, the Commission will be able to start work to identify the most appropriate electoral arrangements for the proposed new local authorities in Wales.

As outlined in section 18 of the Bill, the Commission “must seek to ensure effective and convenient local government in Wales”. It must propose wards that are coherent and strike a balance between building an effective and capable body of elected members while maintaining a close connection between local communities and those who represent them.

The Welsh Government recognises the specialised nature of the Commission’s work and its expertise in conducting electoral reviews. The Commission will need to use its own judgement to take account of the particular characteristics of an area and the impact these may have on the elected member for each ward. There is also no intention to specify to the Commission the order in which it should conduct its reviews, although the deadline for making the last report will be 31 July 2018.

Powys

Powys is not included in the programme of electoral reviews because the Welsh Government’s proposals do not envisage it merging with another local authority - it is proposed that it will remain as a “continuing authority”.

The electoral arrangements in Powys were most recently reviewed in 2011; however, the recommendations from that review have not yet been

implemented. The Welsh Government, therefore, intends to implement the recommended arrangements in time for the local elections in 2017.

These Draft Directions allow the Commission to recommend a lesser number of elected members for a new local authority area than there will be in Powys in 2017 following the recommendations of the Commission's review in 2011. Following the programme of local government reform, the Commission will recommence its routine of 10 year cycles of electoral reviews for local authorities and will begin this new round with Powys.

Directions

We would welcome views from a wide range of our stakeholders on the Draft Directions and, in particular, on the following issues.

Note: The General Directions include provisions to which the Commission must have regard. They are not to be interpreted as rules and should be read in conjunction with sections 16 to 18 of the Local Government (Wales) Bill 2015.

Number of elected members per local authority area

In recognising the increase in size of local authorities when merged together, the Minister for Public Services has announced that the cap of the maximum number of 75 elected members per local authority will be removed. The Directions do not specify a maximum or minimum number of elected members but they specify that the number of councillors for a local authority should be no smaller than the number produced by a councillor to elector ratio of one councillor to every 4,000 electors.

- **Question 1: Do you think the suggested ratio provides for effective and convenient local government?**
- **Question 2: Do you think there is a minimum number of councillors required to ensure the effective and democratic working of a local authority? If so, what is it and why?**
- **Question 3: Do you think a minimum number of elected members per local authority should be specified in the Draft Directions?**
- **Question 4: Do you think that there should be a cap on the maximum number of elected members per local authority? If so, what do you think the maximum number should be and why?**
- **Question 5: Do you agree that each ward within a local authority area should have roughly the same number of electors per elected member?**

Particular characteristics of a ward

The Draft Directions specify that the Commission must consider the particular characteristics of a proposed local authority area when reviewing the warding arrangements. Particular characteristics may include density of population in an area, the mixture of Welsh and English speaking communities and the geography of an area or issues such as poverty.

- **Question 6: What effect should the particular characteristics of an area have on the number of councillors needed to represent the population?**

Naming of wards

The Commission is tasked with proposing names for each ward. It is expected that commonly used and locally accepted Welsh language names will be used. Where there is no commonly used Welsh language name for a ward, the Commission must also propose an English language equivalent.

- **Question 7: Do you agree that commonly used Welsh language names for wards do not also need an English language equivalent? If not, do you think that each ward should have an English and Welsh name?**

Consultation Response Form

Name:

Email:

Telephone:

Address:

Postcode:

Organisation
(if applicable)

Returning this form

The closing date for replies is **9 November 2015**

Please send this completed form to us by email to:

RLGProgramme@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Or by post to:

Reforming Local Government Programme
Welsh Government
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

If you are sending your response by email, please mark the subject of your e-mail: **Directions to the LDBCW Consultation**

Question 1. Do you think the suggested ratio provides for effective and convenient local government?

Yes
No

If no, please explain:

Question 2. Do you think there is a minimum number of councillors required to ensure the effective and democratic working of a local authority?

Yes
No

If yes, what is it and why?

Question 3. Do you think a minimum number of elected members per local authority should be specified in the Draft Directions?

Yes
No

Give reasons for your response:

Question 4. Do you think that there should be a cap on the maximum number of elected members per local authority?

Yes
No

If yes, what do you think the maximum number should be and why?

Question 5. Do you agree that each ward within a local authority area should have roughly the same number of electors per elected member?

Yes
No

Give reasons for your response:

Question 6. What effect should the particular characteristics of an area have on the number of councillors needed to represent the population?

Question 7. Do you agree that commonly used Welsh language names for wards do not also need an English language equivalent?

Yes
No

If no, do you think that each ward should have an English and Welsh name?

Yes
No

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:

Draft Directions to Boundary Commission for Initial Reviews

No maximum or minimum council size, but councils cannot have a councillor/elector ratio of lower than 1:4,000

Option 1 - 3 Local Authorities in North Wales

Merging Authorities	Total electors (2015 local government electorate figures)	Total Electors for Proposed new Council	Minimum Number of Councillors for Proposed new Council (based on ration of 1:4,000)	Current Councillor Numbers
Gwynedd	81,672			
Isle of Anglesey	50,352	132,024	33	105
Conwy	93,051			
Denbighshire	76,087	169,138	42	106
Flintshire	118,439			
Wrexham	103,408	221,847	55	122
Ceredigion	54,773			
Carmarthenshire	141,025			
Pembrokeshire	92,189	287,987	72	176
Blaenau Gwent	51,987			
Caerphilly	132,157			
Torfaen	70,073			
Newport	107,135			
Monmouthshire	73,180	434,532	109	250
Swansea	181,167			
Neath Port Talbot	106,621	287,788	72	132
Bridgend	104,300			
Merthyr Tydfil	43,968			
Rhondda, Cynon, Taf	175,682	323,950	81	162
Cardiff	253,607			
The Vale of Glamorgan	96,756	350,363	88	122
Powys*	103,822	103,822	64	73
Wales	2,254,219		616	1248
Average Size Council			68	

Option 2- 2 Local Authorities in North Wales

Merging Authorities	Total electors (2015 local government electorate figures)	Total Electors for Proposed new Council	Minimum Number of Councillors for Proposed new Council (based on ration of 1:4,000)	Current Councillor Numbers
Gwynedd	81,672			
Isle of Anglesey	50,352			
Conwy	93,051	225,075	56	164
Denbighshire	76,087			
Flintshire	118,439			
Wrexham	103,408	297,934	74	169
Ceredigion	54,773			
Carmarthenshire	141,025			
Pembrokeshire	92,189	287,987	72	176
Blaenau Gwent	51,987			
Caerphilly	132,157			
Torfaen	70,073			
Newport	107,135			
Monmouthshire	73,180	434,532	109	250
Swansea	181,167			
Neath Port Talbot	106,621	287,788	72	132
Bridgend	104,300			
Merthyr Tydfil	43,968			
Rhondda, Cynon, Taf	175,682	323,950	81	162
Cardiff	253,607			
The Vale of Glamorgan	96,756	350,363	88	122
Powys*	103,822	103,822	64	73
Wales	2,311,451		616	1248
Average Size Council			77	

**Powys, as a 'continuing authority' is not included in the Direction for 'Initial Reviews' and the consultation paper states that the 2011 Electoral Review will be implemented ahead of the 2017 elections, providing Powys with 64 members. Powys will however be the first council to be reviewed under the Commission's 10 year cycle following mergers; the criteria for this review may be subject to a further Ministerial Direction, however, if the same 1:4000 ratio was applied, Powys would have 26 councillors.*

