

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Monday, 3rd September, 2018 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor L.M.Adams – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

H.Boggis	S. Evans	S. Morgans
J.Bonetto	J. Harries	E. Stephens
G.Caple	P. Jarman	L. Walker
A.Cox	D. Macey	

Cabinet Members County Borough Councillors

R. Bevan – Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing
M. Webber – Cabinet Member for Council Business
C. Leyshon – Cabinet Member for Children & Young People

County Borough Councillors in Attendance

S. A. Bradwick	W. Lewis
A. Chapman	E. Webster
M. Diamond	J. Williams
L. Hooper	R. Turner
G. Hughes	

Education Co-opted Member(s)

Mr. J. Fish – Elected Parent/Governor Representative

Officers in Attendance

Mr. C. Hanagan – Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services

Mr C. B. Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Committee Members - County Borough Councillors J. Brencher, E. George, J. James and C. Jones (Representing GMB), Non-Committee Members – County Borough Councillor S. Rees-Owen and R. Yeo.

11. **ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Director, Legal & Democratic Services informed Committee that for the purpose of accuracy, clarification was required in respect of the titles of both Mr Chris Jones and Mr Christian Hanagan which would read as follows for all future reports, namely Director, Legal & Democratic Services and Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services.

12. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

RESOLVED – to note that there were no declarations of interest made at the meeting pertaining to the agenda.

13. **SCRUTINY TOOLKIT – WELL BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT**

The Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services presented his report in respect of the opportunity to work alongside the Future Generations Commissioner office to pilot a new scrutiny toolkit which would embrace the wellbeing goals and five ways of working within the Well being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (*The Act*).

The Director advised that, as referred to at the meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny held on the 18th April and 25th June 2018 and in consultation with the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, a formal approach is being sought in respect of taking forward the pilot. The Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services advised that following the meeting, nominations would be sought via email for two members from each of the respective Scrutiny Committees to form a politically balanced scrutiny working group which will undertake a review utilising the toolkit formulated by the Commissioner's Office. Committee was informed that nominations from Co-Opted Members would also be welcome.

Further to a query it was confirmed that the email referred to earlier would be circulated immediately following the meeting to enable Members sufficient opportunity to submit their nominations which would be agreed by the Group Leaders.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** -

- 1) To take forward the pilot project working with the Future Generations Commissioner as outlined in section 5 of the report; and
- 2) That the Chair of the working group be appointed at the group's first meeting.

14. REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS BY THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES

In his joint report with the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services, the Director, Legal & Democratic Services presented the proposals developed by Council officers, in accordance with the terms of reference agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on the 12th July 2018, for the revised Council Electoral Ward boundaries. He sought Committee's consideration of the proposals relating to the Council's electoral arrangements as set out in the recommendations within the report.

The Director, Legal & Democratic Services referred Committee to the Electoral Review Timetable which set out the deadlines by which feedback would be received, commencing with Full Council on the 24th October 2018 when consideration of the preferred option proposal from Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be considered. He confirmed that the initial 12 week consultation period was currently underway and would end on the 23rd October 2018 (however, given the date of October Council on the 24th October 2018 the Boundary Commission have extended the deadline for a Council response to 5pm on the 26th October 2018).

The Director advised that there are no changes proposed to be made to 24 existing Electoral Wards but changes are proposed for 18 existing wards.

It was confirmed that a dedicated mailbox had been set up to ensure that the views of this Council's Members are recorded and communicated to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales. It was agreed that information would be circulated to all Members advising them how to access the dedicated mailbox.

Summary of Members' Comments Made

Committee considered the 24 existing Electoral Wards to which no changes are proposed to be made and no comments were made in respect of these.

Aberaman North & South

- Has consideration been given to the LDP in respect of this proposal as land is allocated at the Former Phurnacite Plant, Abercwmboi for 500 dwellings which would increase by at least 500 the number of inhabitants in the area? In 2015 both were known as the Aberaman Ward then the Community First designation triggered the split into two separate communities. I am not content this is a good idea as the strategic site for future development is in the heart of the community. I am sure the Welsh Government would want to see the regeneration of the land at the former Phurnacite Plant (£12 million of public money).
- Former Blaengwar School has also been listed for a development of 300 houses (Local Member Aberaman North)

Cwmbach

- This is a large ward where the public are entitled to expect an additional Member.

Mountain Ash East & West

- In 2015 the ward was split into the communities of Mountain Ash East and West (based on the Communities First initiative) and the Council decided the wards and communities were entitled to an East and West coalition. In 1990 I was the only Councillor for Mountain Ash (both East and West) Why change the status of the two communities? There is reluctance within the communities towards the proposal to merge the existing Electoral Wards of Mountain Ash East and Mountain Ash West as there is a difference between the two areas. Leave it to the people of Mountain Ash to have their say (Local Member Mountain Ash East).

Ynysybwl

- I consider there is a case to be made for linking Ynysybwl and Glyncoch and making it a two Member ward. It makes sense as they are a good fit.
- I agree that Ynysybwl/Coed Y Cwm are a close knit community and close to Glyncoch.

Trealaw & Llwyn-Y-Pia

- I have submitted my comments to the mailbox but will resubmit them (Local Member Llwynypia)

Ferndale & Maerdy

- It would reconnect the community (Local Member Maerdy)
- This is a better merger than with Tylorstown (Local Member Ferndale)
- I disagree – the single Member ward is the way forward. I have an issue with the figures and numbers therefore I disagree with the proposal.

Tylorstown & Ynyshir

- To lose two Councillors from the Rhondda Fach is excessive and lets the public down (Local Member Ynyshir)

Treorchy

- This will create a ward which will take the representation levels to +10% and +25% and yet the purpose of the exercise is to eliminate wards, that is part and parcel of the exercise. Treorchy is a flourishing town centre where the responsibility of Community Councils in other wards is picked up by County Councillors. If the Northern Valleys are to prosper, they must not be sacrificed by the growth in the South. The level of representation matters to all parts of

RCT and the Northern part of the County deserves representation. Is the population of those eligible to vote a consideration as there are examples of areas where the population eligible to vote is less than the electorate – can the data be checked?

(It was reported that there are examples where people are registered as electors but not as voters such as those within the armed forces or those voting by post).

- What consideration is being given to the electoral division registering more people?

(It was reported that the canvass process for Rhondda Cynon Taf, is now a detailed process and is currently underway, and will involve visits to properties to encourage registration).

Beddau & Tyn-Y-Nant

- This is a well tested arrangement

Brynna & Llanharan

- This is the fastest growing ward in the County Borough with a proposal that a further 1,850 houses will be built. I disagree with the proposal to merge the existing Electoral Wards of Brynna and Llanharan to create a single three member ward. Bryncae and Brynna would be manageable but with the new housing estates, Llanilid would have to be included and that does not fit the one ward proposal. Currently, there are 2,019 electors within Brynna village with further planning permission granted for 250 new homes, so this ward alone can justify having its own Councillor. The clerk of Llanharan Community Council has commented that the projected figures within the report are underestimated. I have also consulted with my fellow local Member who agrees that Llanharan, Brynna and Llanilid should be kept separate (Local Member Brynna)
- A single, three member ward flies in the face of the three communities. Logical to create three distinct electoral divisions.

Graig & Rhondda

- This would split the village of Trehafod. Pontypridd Town Council is to consider and address the issue of the one village syndrome.

Llantrisant Town & Talbot Green

(No comments were provided)

Tonyrefail West

(No comments were provided)

Church Village & Ton-teg

- I support this proposal (Local Member Tonteg)

Llanharry & Ponty-y-clun

- Consideration should be given to Miskin, Groesfain and Hendy remaining separate with one Member and Pont-y-clun as the other. Three member arrangement goes against the principles adopted.

Hawthorn & Rhydfelen Central/Ilan

- Keep this two – its a compact area
- This is a massive ward where there has been significant increase in development; three sites have been built recently. It is under represented (Local Member - Rhydfelin)

Hirwaun & Rhigos

- Hirwaun is a strategic site in the LDP which will result in a significant increase in the number of dwellings. It is an important growth area in the northern part of the County Borough. Has the option of Rhigos being included with Brecon Beacons National Park been considered?
(It was reported that other rural areas are subject to a different representation ratio).

Treforest

(No comments were provided)

In addition to the comments presented at the meeting, the Chair urged all members to submit their representations via the dedicated mailbox. The Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services reminded Committee of the timeline for comments to be submitted and confirmed that the final version, which will take in all the expressions and comments will be presented to Full Council to be held on the 24th October 2018.

A Member confirmed that they are unable to endorse the proposals in their entirety as a result of the degree of discontentment shown by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee following scrutiny of the proposals relating to the Council's electoral arrangements.

Following discussion of the proposals it was **RESOLVED –**

In accordance with the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales' Council Size Policy that the number of Elected Members for this Council remains at 75;

2.1.2 A proposed reduction in Electoral Wards from 52 to 44 resulting in the Electoral Wards shown in Appendix 3 to the report;

2.1.3 No changes are proposed to be made to 24 existing Electoral Wards as detailed in paragraph 6.3 of the report;

2.1.4 Retaining 4 existing Electoral Wards but increasing or decreasing the number of Members representing the particular Electoral Ward as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report;

2.1.5 Revised Electoral Ward boundaries for 18 existing Electoral Wards through merging existing Electoral Wards (and associated Community Wards) and any associated changes in Member representation as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report thereby creating 9 new Electoral Wards;

2.1.6

2.1.6.1 Revised Electoral Ward boundaries for 6 existing Electoral Wards through revising Community Ward boundaries and any associated changes in Member representation as detailed in paragraphs 6.19 and 6.20 of the report and shown on the maps set out in Appendix 4 to the report; and

2.1.6.2 Creation of 1 new Electoral Ward as a consequential effect of a revision to the existing Electoral Ward boundaries (and associated constituent Community Wards) of Hawthorn and Rhydfelen Central/Ilan as detailed in paragraph 6.20 of the report and shown on the maps set out in Appendix 4 to the report;

thereby creating 7 new Electoral Wards.

2.2 Subject to the comments made this day (and as recorded) , to recommend to Full Council that the proposals be subject to a period of stakeholder engagement prior to further consideration by Full Council at its October meeting and submission of a final Council proposal to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales by 26th October 2018.

**L.M.ADAMS
CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 18.10 p.m.