

Meeting of:	<b>Community Liaison Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Thursday, 23 March 2023</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Community Boundary Area Review
Purpose of Report:	To update the Committee on the Council's Community Boundary Area Review
Report Owner:	Rob Thomas Electoral Registration Officer
Responsible Officer:	Rachel Starr-Wood Electoral Services Manager
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This report has Council wide implications, and all Ward Members have been forwarded a copy of the report as have members of the cross-party working group.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Cabinet although in due course, the outcome of the review will be a matter for Full Council
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 Community Liaison Committee was <a href="#">presented</a>, as part of pre-engagement, with an <a href="#">overview</a> of the Vale of Glamorgan Council Community Review and the process to be adopted.</li> <li>A <a href="#">report</a> was presented to Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022 to update Members on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Community Boundary Area Review ("the Review") and the process to be adopted. The report was referred to the Committee and a copy of the report was circulated to all Town and Community Councils in the Vale of Glamorgan area. The Council's Terms of Reference ("ToR") of the review was appended to the Cabinet Report at Appendix A and included a Council Size Policy.</li> <li>The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Community Review which is being undertaken by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales ("the Commission") commenced on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023.</li> <li>This report sets out suggested consideration for the Boundary Commission. Following the reporting to Community Liaison Committee, the report will be considered by Cabinet on 30 March. In advance of this the report will be issued to the Boundary Commission in advance of the 28 March</li> </ul>	

consultation deadline with any additional comments or observations from Cabinet forwarded to the commission under separate cover.

## **Recommendations**

1. That Community Liaison Committee considers the Vale of Glamorgan Council's draft response to the Commission's initial consultation on the first stage of the review and comments on the same.
2. That this report be referred to Cabinet on the 30 March 2023, along with any recommendations from this Committee for consideration.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

1. To appraise the Community Liaison Committee of the Council's response to the Commission's initial consultation on the first stage of the review and to seek views on the same.
2. To update Cabinet and to approve the response to the initial consultation phase of the review.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1** The Council has a duty under s22 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 to report every ten years on its community review activities.
- 1.2** At the conclusion of a s25 boundaries review, the principal council may recommend "community boundary changes". These are defined in section 23(4) of the Act as including changes to the boundary of an existing Community Council, but also the abolition of an existing community and the creation of a new community.
- 1.3** At the conclusion of a s31 electoral review, a principal council is entitled to "propose and make" changes to the electoral arrangements for the community under review. Consideration in this instant should be given in particular to the degree in which 'electoral parity' is achieved.
- 1.4** Further updating reports will be taken to Cabinet, and at critical points in the process, to Full Council, as necessary, and in line with the requirements of the Act.
- 1.5** On the 27th of October 2022 Community Liaison Committee was presented, as part of pre-engagement, with an overview of the Vale of Glamorgan Council Community Review and the process to be adopted.
- 1.6** A report was presented to Cabinet on 17th November 2022 to update Members on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Community Boundary Area Review ("the Review") and the process to be adopted. The report was referred to the Committee and a copy of the report was circulated to all Town and Community Councils in the Vale of Glamorgan area. The

Council's Terms of Reference ("ToR") of the review was appended to the Cabinet Report at Appendix A and included a Council Size Policy.

- 1.7** The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Community Review which is being undertaken by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales ("the Commission") commenced on 20th January 2023.
- 1.8** The first stage of the review includes investigation and an initial consultation period, which commenced on 1st February 2023. The Commission is seeking consultee responses from all interested parties in respect of the current community boundaries and their views on any changes required to create communities that provide for effective and convenient local government. The closing date of this initial consultation period is 28th March 2023 by which time all comments should be submitted.
- 1.9** As part of the initial consultation, a briefing / workshop for all Town and Community Councils was held at the Civic Offices on 1st February 2023, which was led by the Commission. Of the 26 Community Councils in the Vale of Glamorgan, 22 were represented at the workshop.
- 1.10** A meeting of the Cross-Party working group, set up prior to the pre-engagement work being undertaken, was held on 8th March 2023. When convening the Cross-Party working group, consisting of County Councillors, the political balance of the Council was disregarded in agreement with party leaders and a representative from each political group, including the independent members were included in that group.
- 1.11** The commission as part of their pre-engagement communications plan has advertised the Vale of Glamorgan Community Review in local papers, social media outlets and local radio. These adverts included a link to the commission website where representations on the review can be submitted by members of the public.
- 1.12** All mandatory consultees and stakeholders have received by letter or email the Initial Notice of Consultation and Terms of Reference
- 1.13** The Vale of Glamorgan Electoral Registration section has updated their webpage to include details of the Community Review and details on how to submit a response to the Commission's public consultation.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1** The Council's community review commenced in January 2023. The Consultation on the First Stage of the Review commenced on 1 February and concludes on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2023. The Commission is conducting the Consultation.
- 2.2** On completion of the First Stage Consultation the Commission will publish a Draft Proposals Report and will hold a consultation on those proposals, lasting 8 weeks, between June 2023 and August 2023.

- 2.3** All submissions will then be considered, and Final Recommendations will be submitted to Welsh Government Ministers who will then, if it thinks fit, to give effect to these recommendations either as submitted, or with modifications.
- 2.4** The Commission aims to ensure that community boundaries reflect the identities and interests of the communities across the principal council area and that they are both effective and convenient local government.
- 2.5** The Commission will have due regard to the creation, abolition, or merging of communities or community wards; the name of the community and, where warded, the name of the community wards; and where changes have been made to the boundaries of communities or community wards the number of councillors representing the community and, where warded, the number of councillors per ward.
- 2.6** The review will look at the community boundaries across the principal council area. **However, any changes to electoral arrangements for communities will only be considered as a consequence of any changes to community boundaries.**
- 2.7** In formulating the Council's response to the First Stage Review, the working group considered and reviewed the draft proposals taking into consideration representations received at the draft consultation stage, as well as minutes of the working group that formulated the draft proposals and minutes of the briefing session/workshop held with Town and Community Councils in drafting the Council's first stage proposals.
- 2.8** In developing the Council's response to the first stage of the review, the Council has applied the following 'key' considerations:
- Council Size Policy, referenced as a guide only.
  - Current boundary arrangements which appear to work well and those which appear to result in a degree of confusion.
  - The footprint in urban communities and how they align to and work alongside the principal areas within which they are located, and whether such an approach could be applied to other mixed and rural areas. For example, Barry Town Council has 8 community wards and the same county wards on the same footprints.
  - Consideration of geographical and spatial spread of any community boundaries and local services, particularly in rural areas.
  - Anomalous boundaries identified which will be reported to the Commission for consideration. Examples include housing developments which are split into two community areas such as Highlight Park, Barry.
  - New housing development that has occurred since the last review was undertaken which may no longer relate to the community area they are located within. A good example relates to the Darren Farm development on the western edge of Cowbridge but located within the Penllyn community.

- Actual and proposed new developments in the proceeding 5 years, thereby future proofing communities until the next mandatory review. Good examples relate to new allocations for residential development in the Cosmeston area of Penarth/Lavernock and land adjoining the Northern Access Road in Llantwit Major/Llanmaes.
- Current membership, the extent of co-options, and casual vacancies, which provide an indication of the democratic effectiveness of current arrangements.

**2.9** In assessing the key considerations outlined above in relation to the boundary areas within the Vale of Glamorgan, the following suggested proposals, as discussed with the Cross-Party working group, are set out for consideration by consultees and to facilitate more detailed consideration during the second stage of the review, subject to advice and guidance by the Commission. It should be noted that comments and suggestions are being made at a strategic level and the suggestions do not deal with detailed matters of boundary lines, other than in areas where this relates to anomalous boundaries as set out above. It is expected that Town and Community Councils will make detailed comments relating to their particular areas and boundaries.

**2.10** In relation to **Barry Town Council**, there are some options worthy of consideration, as follows:

**2.11** Consideration should be given to whether there needs to be the creation of a new community for the Waterfront area. This was an approach taken previously in Swansea Waterfront and the Boundary Commission will need to consider whether there is merit in adopting a similar approach in Barry. This would mean placing the newer waterfront area into a new community by 'removing' residential properties from Baruc, Buttrills and Castleland wards. Consideration would need to be given to whether this would have an impact on current arrangements in terms of numbers of electors and representatives in each of those existing wards, but initial considerations suggests that these wards would be unaffected. There would need to be a consequential change with the creation of a new ward at principal authority level. For information, if a new waterfront ward was to be created, it would involve the creation of a ward with 2641 electors. The number of electors in Baruc would fall from 6658 to 5157, Buttrills from 4416 to 4104 and Castleland from 3471 to 2643. There is a further potential to negate the impact on the Buttrills and Castleland wards by further considering their boundaries to other neighbouring wards.

**2.12** There is also an anomaly within Barry with Highlight Park currently being split between two community wards of Illtyd and Dyfan. Consideration should be given as to whether there is scope to amend these boundaries so that Highlight Park is contained within one ward. Again, this would lead to a consequential change at principal authority level.

**2.13** Finally, there is a proposed new residential development at Pencoedtre (eastern edge of Pencoedtre High School), which currently falls within

Gibbonsdown. The relationship of this new development to the existing Pencoedtre development is such that this site should fall within Cadoc ward. Again, there would be a need for a consequential change at principal authority level.

- 2.14** In relation to the current arrangements at the western boundary of **Penarth Town Council and eastern boundary of Sully and Lavernock Community Council**, applying the key considerations outlined above, taking into consideration the geography surrounding the area known locally as Cosmeston; the proposed development in that area; the close proximity of the area of Cosmeston, which borders geographically the Plymouth ward, Penarth; and the relatively large geographical area which falls between Cosmeston and Lavernock and Sully, an option, which may merit consideration could see the creation of a new ward using part of Lavernock. The boundary line would run from the end of the Plymouth ward, ending at the eastern side of Fort Road. The effect of this proposal would see this new ward forming part of the community boundary of Penarth. If this approach was followed, there would be a new ward created at principal authority level as a consequential change.
- 2.15** In terms of **Llantwit Major**, there is new development proposed to the northeast of the town along the new Northern Access Road. Consideration should therefore be given to the relationship of the town to this area and the surrounding existing community council area of Llanmaes.
- 2.16** In respect of the community boundary area of **Llanmaes**, an option to consider might be an amalgamation of the Llanmaes ward with Llantwit Major Town Council. Currently, Llanmaes remains its own ward, at only 341 electors represented by seven councillors. Following the LGE's in May 2022, Llanmaes co-opted one councillor. If Llanmaes fell within the community boundary area with Llantwit Major, this would result in an increase in the number of wards in Llantwit Major, increasing from 4 to 5. It would also seem to constitute a logical approach given the extent of the new development proposed along the Northern Access Road, the relevant service centre being Llantwit Major town and the close geographical relationship between Llantwit Major and Llanmaes. Following the last LGE's in May 2022, Llanmaes co-opted one community council member.
- 2.17** In relation to **Cowbridge**, there appears to be a discrepancy at the western edge of the town, with the development of Darren Farm (Clare Garden village). This currently falls within Penllyn Community ward and would be better served by being within Cowbridge, given the relationship of the new development to the town itself. It is understood that this will be raised by both Penllyn Community Council and Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council as part of the response to this initial consultation.
- 2.18** In relation to the remaining more rural and mixed communities of the Vale of Glamorgan, the following comments are offered as suggestions.
- 2.19** In relation to **Llandough**, and the relationship with **Leckwith, and Michaelston**, one approach could be an amalgamation of Llandough with

Leckwith ward to form a single community boundary area, taking into consideration the geographical location and the relationship of both Llandough and Leckwith to the main highway corridor (B4267) which connects both of these areas. Llandough co-opted four community councillors following the last Local Government Elections in May 2022: Leckwith, two community council members. Llandough currently has 1475 electors and Leckwith 73 electors, so combining these two communities will lead to a very slight increase to 1548 electors for the new community area.

- 2.20** As a consequence of the above, arguably, it follows, that Michaelston which has 191 electors and currently forms a community with Leckwith, could be realigned to form part of the community boundary area with **Dinas Powys**, given the location of and access from Pen-y-Turnpike Road and the close proximity of Michaelston with Dinas Powys and its amenities. Following the last LGE's in May 2022, Michaelston co-opted two community council members. Michaelston Le-Pit with Leckwith currently has 264 electors.
- 2.21** In relation to the northern Vale, and the community areas of **St Georges, St Brides Super Ely, Peterston Super Ely, Pendoylan and Welsh St Donats**, the following comments are offered as suggestions, notwithstanding that the former principal authority ward boundary was changed at the last review in advance of the last local government elections. That change saw St Georges and St Brides fall into the new St Nicholas and Llancarfan ward despite being more geographically related and connected to its neighbouring community at Peterston Super Ely.
- 2.22** Currently Peterston Super Ely, is its own community boundary area, with Pendoylan and Welsh St Donats respectively its own community boundary area as is St Georges and St Brides. The number of electors for each area are 694 in Peterston super Ely, 415 in Pendoylan, 425 in Welsh St Donats, 232 in St Georges and 96 in St Brides respectively.
- 2.23** Following the last LGE in May 2022, St Georges co-opted three community council members. Peterston Super Ely co-opted five community council members following the last LGE in May 2022.
- 2.1** An option in respect of the areas referred to above, taking into consideration the geographical location of each area, their relationship to each other and linkages between the various communities, may consist of an amalgamation of St Georges and St Brides Super Ely with Peterston Super Ely, as one community boundary area (1022electors). Alongside this Pendoylan and Welsh St Donats could amalgamate to form one community area (840 electors).
- 2.2** However, as alluded to above, this would result in a principal area consequential change, which could see communities move from St Nicholas and Llancarfan Principal Area ward back to Peterston Super Ely. This would be something that the Boundary Commission would need to consider.



- 2.3** In terms of the relationship between **St Nicholas and Bonvilston community area and areas currently within Wenvoe**, as well as other communities within the St Nicholas and Llancarfan Principal Area ward, an amalgamation of St Nicholas and Bonvilston with Dyffryn and St Lythans would appear sensible given the linkages between these communities that currently lie within two different principal area wards. There are also a small number of properties at the Downs which fall outside this community area (currently in St Georges), given that the logical boundary is the main route of the A48, which provides a physical connection between The Downs and St Nicholas. It would be sensible to amend the boundary to reflect this fact.
- 2.4** St Lythans (Dyffryn) is currently located in St Lythans which would of itself cause a consequential change moving Dyffryn from Wenvoe principal area to St Nicholas and Llancarfan. Amalgamation of St Nicholas and Bonvilston with St Lythans with a small number of premises currently related to the area of the Downs, (currently excluded) would create a community ward of 912 electors (870 being the existing figure for St Nicholas and Bonvilston and approximately 32 being the figure for St Lythans (Dyffryn) and the small number of properties.
- 2.5** In addition, and considering the remainder of the St Nicholas and Llancarfan principal area, **Llancarfan community** currently has 443 electors and Llanrithyd 171 electors. An amalgamation to include the community of Penmark (129 electors) (currently lies within the Rhoose principal area) but located north of the main coastal road would see the creation of a community area of 743 electors. Under this option, Penmark would move to St Nicholas and Llancarfan principal area.
- 2.6** In relation to **Llanfair and St Hilary**, one suggestion would be to move this community into the Cowbridge community boundary area albeit retaining its status as its own ward within the Cowbridge Town area. This proposal takes into consideration the close links of this rural area with Cowbridge, the available amenities and lead to greater representation locally.
- 2.7** St Hilary co-opted one community council member following the last LGE in May 2022 for 183 electors.
- 2.8** In the western Vale, there are several options that could be considered. It is possible that **Colwinston** ward could amalgamate with **Llandow, Llysworney, and Llanmihangel** wards to become one community boundary area. This would result in a single community area serving an electorate of 1054, as opposed to smaller community areas that currently exist serving a smaller number of electorates of 480 electors in Colwinston, 223 electors in Llandow, 223 electors in Llysworney and 128 electors in Llanmihangel.
- 2.9** A further option could involve **Ewenny** ward amalgamating with **Ogmore by Sea and St Brides Major** to become one community boundary area. Ewenny currently serves an electorate of 594 and amalgamation would result in a larger community area serving 2525. That said, it is

acknowledged that the case for change in this instance, given the existing sizes of these communities is not as strong as some other of the smaller rural community wards.

- 2.10** In contrast, there is a strong case for the **Wick** ward (775 electors) to be amalgamated with **Monknash** (35 electors) **Marcross** (107 electors) and **St Donats** wards (169 electors) to become one community boundary area.
- 2.11** Following the last LGE in May 2022 Ewenny co-opted three community council members, Ogmores-by-Sea, St Brides Major, three, and Marcross one community council member.
- 2.12** In relation to St Donats, taking into consideration the geographical locations, a voice to represent these communities, ensuring sustainable councillor representation in these areas may be key factors to consider in the context of these suggested proposals.
- 2.13** Town and Community Councils have the opportunity and are responding separately to the review, to ensure that the boundaries of their community reflect how their community operates on the ground and to ensure that the representation of their constituents is appropriate.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1** The review of community arrangements safeguards the long-term needs of local residents to ensure an effective and convenient local government and electoral equality.
- 3.2** The Vale of Glamorgan Council will be submitting a proposal to the Commission in line with effective collaboration between bodies.
- 3.3** The Commission are undertaking the review, but the Vale of Glamorgan Council will ensure that it will support the Commission in ensuring the relevant notices are published and facilitating presentations to encourage engagement with stakeholders.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1** There are no direct climate change implications associated with the undertaking of the review.

### **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

#### **Financial**

- 5.1** The publishing and administrative costs of the review will be met from the Electoral Registration Services existing budget.

**5.2** 5.2 The total fees payable to the Commission will be approximately £30,000 based on a tier 1 advertising and promotion. An exact figure cannot be provided at this stage, due to some of the fees being charged at cost as and when they occur. A breakdown is included below.

- Boundary Commission Flat Fee - £13,500
- Translation – Recharged at cost.
- Printing – Recharged at cost.
- Postage – Recharged at cost.
- Travel & Sustenance – Recharged at cost.
- Advertising and Promotion – Recharged at cost.

**5.3** Three tiers have been created in relation to this, and it is up to the Council to decide which option would best suit our requirements.

Tier 1  Approx. £9,141.20	Front page ads in each local newspaper, twice per Review stage	Social media advertising to reach equivalent of 100% of residents, for each Review stage (600% across Review)
Tier 2  Approx. £4,570.60	Front page ads in each local newspaper, once per Review stage	Social media advertising to reach equivalent of 300% of residents across Review
Tier 3  Approx. £1,176.19	Front page ads in each local newspaper at start of Review and select titles at other stages	Social media advertising to reach equivalent of 100% of residents across Review

### **Employment**

**5.4** There are no employment implications arising as a result of this report.

### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

**5.5** Each principal council has a duty to monitor the communities in its area and, where appropriate, the electoral arrangements of such communities for the purpose of considering whether to make or recommend changes. These changes are brought about by means of community boundary reviews under s25 and community electoral reviews under s31 of the Act.

- 5.6** The statutory process for conducting a community review is set out in Part 3 of the Act.
- 5.7** Section 34 of the Act stipulates the ‘mandatory consultees’ for a community review.
- 5.8** When conducting a community review the principal council must have regard to its statutory obligations – for example obligations under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, Welsh Language Standards, and the Equality Act 2010, which will all influence and inform the conduct and decisions made during a community review.

## **6. Background Papers**