



Comisiwn Ffiniau
i Gymru

Boundary Commission
for Wales

2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies

Wales Progress Report

January 2022

Boundary Commission for Wales

2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies Wales

Report on progress during 2021

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 3(2C) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 and Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020.

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The Speaker
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

27 January 2022

Dear Mr Chairman

Introduction

1. This report, as required by section 3(2B) of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended by the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 and Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020), hereafter referred to as ‘the Act’, sets out the progress the Boundary Commission for Wales (“the Commission”) has made in respect of the preparation of the boundary review that is to be submitted before 1 July 2023. As you will be aware, you are required by section 3(2C) to lay our report before Parliament.

Start of the review

2. On 5 January 2021 the Commission announced the start of the 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales and published the total UK electorate, electoral quota and the allocation of constituencies to Wales. For the 2023 Review, the allocation for Wales is 32, including the protected constituency of Ynys Môn.
3. The Commission published its ‘Guide to the 2023 Review’ in both English and Welsh on the 17 March 2021 which included the policies and procedures for the review. In order to improve accessibility to the work of the Commission, an Easy Read version was also published as well as a British Sign Language translation of the guide.

Initial meetings held with stakeholders

4. As per previous Parliamentary Reviews, the Commission held a series of meetings with key stakeholders. The first meeting was held on 1 March 2021 with political parties that were represented in the UK Parliament or the Senedd, followed by a meeting with interested parties on the 5 March 2021. The final initial meeting was held on the 8 March 2021 with Members of Parliament. The minutes of the three meetings are available on the Commission’s website.

Recruitment of Assistant Commissioners

5. In June 2021, the Commission began its recruitment campaign for Assistant Commissioners to aid the work of the Commission. The Commission received 14 applications and shortlisted seven for interview. A panel consisted of one of the Commissioners (Huw Vaughan Thomas CBE), the Secretary to the Commission (Shereen

Williams MBE) and an independent member (Dame Claire Clancy DCB DL) who interviewed all shortlisted applicants and following agreement from the other Commissioners, recommended four individuals to the Government for appointment. All of which were accepted.

Consultation Portal

6. Leading up to the publication of the initial proposals the Commission in conjunction with the Boundary Commission for England and the Boundary Commission for Scotland developed an online consultation portal. This portal went live in Wales on the same day that the initial proposals were published. The majority of the Commission's representations received in the initial consultation period were submitted via the portal.

Initial proposals and consultation period

7. The Commission published its initial proposals on the 8 September 2021 and held an 8-week consultation period which ended on the 3 November 2021. Political parties and Members of Parliament were provided with an embargoed copy of the report on the 7 September 2021.
8. An extensive promotional campaign was carried out and this included press coverage, adverts on buses, social media and digital adverts which resulted in the Commission receiving 1,211 written representations. This is the highest number of representations the Commission has ever received for a Parliamentary Review.
9. Representations received during the initial consultation period were published on the Commission's website on 17 December 2021.

Secondary consultation period and public hearings

10. In advance of the public hearings, the Commission published a 'Guide to the Public Hearings' to provide information on the format of the hearings as well as the process on booking a speaking slot. It was the intention of the Commission to hold the second consultation period from 11 January 2022 until 21 February 2022. During this consultation period, the Commission was to hold five public hearings in Aberystwyth, Bangor, Wrexham, Swansea, and Cardiff.
11. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing public health challenges arising from the Omicron variant, the Commission has now postponed the start of the second consultation period to the 17 February 2022 and will end on the 30 March 2022. The five public hearings will be held during this period and whilst evidence has to be given in-person, the public hearings will be livestreamed.

Next Steps

12. The representations that the Commission receives during both the first and second consultation periods will be considered by the Assistant Commissioners who will then make recommendations to the Commission as to how it may revise its proposals.
13. The Commission will then consider all of the representations that were made and the recommendations of the Assistant Commissioners and consider changes to the initial proposals. If appropriate the Commission will then publish revised proposals and open a period of consultation on those proposals.
14. The Commission will consider all of the representations made in relation to its revised proposals and decide whether to make any further changes. The Commission is confident that it will be in a position to publish final recommendations before the statutory deadline of before 1 July 2023.

Mrs Justice Jefford DBE
Deputy Chair

Mr Huw Vaughan Thomas CBE
Commissioner

Mr Sam Hartley
Commissioner

Mrs Shereen Williams MBE OStJ DL
Secretary