



**REVIEW OF THE PARLIAMENTARY
CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES IN
THE PRESERVED COUNTIES OF
CLWYD AND GWYNEDD**

**REPORT ON LOCAL INQUIRY
HELD ON 6th JULY 2004 AT POWIS
HALL, UNIVERSITY OF WALES
BANGOR AND ON 8th JULY 2004 AT
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL, RUTHIN**

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES
FIFTH GENERAL REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES.

REPORT OF THE LOCAL INQUIRY IN RESPECT OF THE PRESERVED
COUNTIES OF GWYNEDD AND CLWYD.

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES.

Background.

1. The preserved county of Gwynedd, as constituted at the time of the Fourth General Review of Parliamentary Constituencies, had four constituencies. Their total 2003 electorate was 185,628 made up as follows:

Ynys Môn CC	49,831
Conwy CC	55,009
Caernarfon CC	47,065
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC	33,723

The 2003 electorates of these existing constituencies range from 27.3% below the county average (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC) to 18.5% above the county average (Conwy CC). The disparity is 21,286.

2. The preserved county of Clwyd, as constituted at the time of the Fourth General Review of Parliamentary Constituencies, had six constituencies. Their total 2003 electorate was 323,075 made up as follows:

Alyn and Deeside CC	60,331
Clwyd South CC	53,860 ¹
Clwyd West CC	54,606
Delyn CC	54,277
Vale of Clwyd CC	49,111
Wrexham CC	50,890

The 2003 electorates of these existing constituencies range from 8.4% below the county average (Vale of Clwyd CC) to 12.5% above the county average (Alyn and Deeside CC). The disparity is 11,220.

3. After the establishment of the 22 unitary authorities in Wales in 1996, the boundaries of the preserved counties followed the boundaries of the unitary authorities with two major exceptions. One was in North Wales where the boundary between the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd divided the unitary authority of Conwy. This anomaly was addressed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales in its review of the preserved county boundaries in 2002. It recommended that the boundary between the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd be realigned so that the whole of the unitary authority of Conwy be included within the preserved county of Clwyd. The National Assembly for Wales accepted this recommendation and the change was effected by the Preserved Counties (Amendment to Boundaries) (Wales) Order 2003 which came into effect on 2nd April 2003.
4. The effect of this change in the boundaries of the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd is that substantial parts of Conwy CC and Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC have been transferred from the preserved county of Gwynedd to the preserved county of Clwyd.
5. The total electorate at the evaluation date of those constituencies or parts of constituencies which remain in the preserved county of Gwynedd at the date of the current review is 141,652 made up as follows:

Ynys Môn CC	49,831
Caernarfon CC	47,065
Conwy CC (part)	18,004
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC (part)	26,752

¹ This includes 1,358 electors in the preserved county of Powys. Part of the existing Clwyd South constituency falls within the boundary of the preserved county of Powys due to changes made to that boundary by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994. See paragraph 8, below.

When divided by the 2003 electoral quota of 55,640 this produces a theoretical entitlement to 2.55 seats.

6. The total 2003 electorate of those constituencies or parts of constituencies which are within Clwyd at the date of the current review is 365,693 made up as follows:

Alyn and Deeside CC	60,331
Clwyd South CC	53,860 ²
Clwyd West CC	54,606
Delyn CC	54,277
Vale of Clwyd CC	49,111
Wrexham CC	50,890
Conwy CC (part)	37,005
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC (part)	6,971

When divided by the 2003 electoral quota of 55,640 this produces a theoretical entitlement to 6.57 seats.

7. If the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd were to be considered in conjunction the total electorate would be 507,345³. When divided by the 2003 electoral quota of 55,640 this produces a theoretical entitlement to 9.12 seats.
8. Furthermore, since the last general review there has been a change in the boundary between the preserved county of Clwyd and the preserved county of Powys. The Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant/Llansilin electoral division was formerly within Clwyd but was transferred to Powys by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994. That electoral division is included in the existing Clwyd South constituency, which, as a result, crosses the new boundary. The 2003 electorate of that electoral division is 1,358.

² See note 1, above.

³ See note 1, above.

9. During the local inquiry my attention was drawn to various statements made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales in its Review of Preserved County Boundaries, November 2002. Contrary to a submission made in the local inquiry, I do not consider that those statements amount to an assurance that the changes to the preserved counties would not affect the boundaries of Parliamentary constituencies. The statement at paragraph 6.18 that “the proposed change [in the boundaries of the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd] need not necessarily have an impact on the parliamentary constituencies” must be read in the context of paragraphs 6.7 – 6.10 which explained the significance of preserved counties under Schedule 2, Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 and addressed the extent to which departure from Rule 4 may be permitted. It expressly stated (at paragraph 6.9) that “[I]t will be for the Boundary Commission for Wales to decide on the approach they take to this issue during the next general review of parliamentary constituencies.” It is clear to me that the effect of these changes is among the principal issues for consideration in the present review.

The provisional recommendations of the Commission.

10. In view of the boundary change between Gwynedd and Clwyd the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales (“the Commission”) considered the possibility of addressing Gwynedd and Clwyd together for the purposes of this review. However, it concluded that the two preserved counties could be dealt with satisfactorily if looked at separately and that this would better accord with Rule 4.

(1) Gwynedd.

11. The Commission proposes that the number of constituencies in Gwynedd should be reduced from 4 to 3.

12. The Commission proposes to retain the existing Ynys Môn constituency.

13. The Commission proposes that the two remaining seats be created by utilising the Gwynedd County Council Area Committee areas of Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd (the former District Council areas). It is proposed that one constituency, to be called

Arfon CC, consist of the electoral divisions making up the Arfon Area Committee area. It is proposed that the other constituency, to be called Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC, consist of the electoral divisions making up both the Dwyfor Area Committee and the Meirionnydd Area Committee areas.

14. The 2003 electorates of the proposed constituencies would be as follows:

Ynys Môn CC	49,831
Arfon CC	42,998
Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC	48,823

15. The average 2003 electorate in the Gwynedd constituencies would be 47,217. The 2003 electorates of the proposed constituencies would range from 8.94% below the county average (Arfon CC) to 5.54% above the county average (Ynys Môn CC). The disparity would be 6,833.

16. The proposed constituencies would be made up of the following electoral divisions:

ARFON COUNTY CONSTITUENCY (42,998) **Gwynedd County** electoral divisions: Arllechwedd, Bethel, Bontnewydd, Cadnant, Cwm-y-Glo, Deiniol, Deiniolen, Dewi, Garth, Gerlan, Glyder, Groeslon, Hendre, Hirael, Llanberis, Llanllyfni, Llanrug, Llanwnda, Marchog, Menai (Bangor), Menai (Caernarfon), Ogwen, Peblig (Caernarfon), Penisarwaun, Pentir, Penygroes, Seiont, Talysarn, Tregarth & Mynydd Llandygai, Waunfawr, Y Felinheli.

DWYFOR MEIRIONNYDD COUNTY CONSTITUENCY (48,823) **Gwynedd County** electoral divisions: Aberdaron, Aberdovey, Abererch, Abermaw, Abersoch, Bala, Botwnnog, Bowydd & Rhiw, Brithdir & Llanfachreth/Ganllwyd/Llanelltyd, Bryn-crug/Llanfihangel, Clynnog, Corris/Mawddwy, Criccieth, Diffwys & Maenofferen, Dolbenmaen, Dolgellau North, Dolgellau South, Dyffryn Arduwy, Efail-newydd/Baun, Harlech, Llanaelhaearn, Llanbedr, Llanbedrog, Llandderfel, Llanengan, Llangelynin, Llanuwchllyn, Llanystumdwy, Morfa Nefyn, Nefyn, Penrhyndeudraeth,

Porthmadog East, Porthmadog West, Porthmadog-Tremadog, Pwllheli North, Pwllheli South, Teigl, Trawsfynydd, Tudweiliog, Tywyn.

YNYS MÔN COUNTY CONSTITUENCY (49,831) **Isle of Anglesey County**
electoral Divisions: Aberffraw, Amlwch Port, Amlwch Rural, Beaumaris, Bodffordd, Bodorgan, Braint, Bryngwran, Brynteg, Cadnant, Cefni, Cwm Cadnant, Cyngar, Gwyngyll, Holyhead Town, Kingsland, Llanbadrig, Llanbedrgoch, Llanddyfnan, Llanelian, Llanfaethlu, Llanfair-yn-Neubwll, Llanfihangel Ysgeifiog, Llangoed, Llanidan, Llannerch-y-medd, London Road, Maeshyfryd, Mechell, Moelfre, Morawelon, Parc a'r Myndydd, Pentreath, Porthyfelin, Rhosneigr, Rhosyr, Trearddur, Tudur, Tysilio, Valley.

(2) Clwyd.

17. The Commission proposes that the number of constituencies in Clwyd should be increased from six to seven.
18. The Commission proposes to preserve unchanged the existing constituencies of Alyn and Deeside CC, Delyn CC and Wrexham CC.
19. The Commission proposes to make minor changes to Clwyd South CC, Clwyd West CC and Vale of Clwyd CC to take account of changes to electoral division boundaries following a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales. At present four of the new electoral divisions – Efenechtyd, Llanharmon-yn-Ial/Llandegla, Llandyrnog and Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern – are partly in one constituency and partly in another. The Commission proposes to realign the constituency boundaries with the boundaries of these divided electoral divisions. It proposes that the electoral divisions of Efenechtyd, Llanharmon-yn-Ial/Llandegla and Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern should be in Clwyd West CC, and that the electoral division of Llandyrnog should be in Vale of Clwyd CC.

20. The Commission proposes that the electoral division of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant/Llansilin should be removed from the Clwyd South constituency and included within a Powys constituency.

21. The Commission proposes that those parts of the existing Conwy and Meirionnydd Nant Conwy constituencies previously within Gwynedd but now within Clwyd should be combined into a single new constituency and that the name Conwy CC should be retained for this new constituency.

22. The 2003 electorate of the proposed constituencies would be as follows:

Alyn and Deeside CC	60,331
Clwyd South CC	51,201
Clwyd West CC	55,381
Conwy CC	43,976
Delyn CC	54,277
Vale of Clwyd CC	49,637
Wrexham CC	50,890

23. The average 2003 electorate in the Clwyd constituencies would be 52,242. The 2003 electorates of the proposed constituencies would range from 15.82% below the county average (Conwy CC) to 15.48% above the county average (Alyn and Deeside CC). The disparity would be 16,355.

24. The composition of the proposed constituencies would be as follows:

ALYN AND DEESIDE COUNTY CONSTITUENCY (60,331) **Flintshire County** electoral divisions: Aston, Broughton North East, Broughton South, Buckley Bistre East, Buckley Bistre West, Buckley Mountain, Buckley Pentrobin, Caergwrle, Connah's Quay Central, Connah's Quay Golftyn, Connah's Quay South, Connah's Quay Wepre, Ewloe, Hawarden, Higher Kinnerton, Hope, Llanfynydd, Mancot, Penyffordd, Queensferry, Saltney Mold Junction, Saltney Stonebridge, Sealand, Shotton East, Shotton Higher, Shotton West, Treuddyn.

CLWYD SOUTH COUNTY CONSTITUENCY (51,201) **Denbighshire County** electoral divisions: Corwen, Llandrillo, Llangollen, **Wrexham County** electoral divisions: Bronington, Brymbo, Bryn Cefn, Cefn, Dyffryn Ceiriog/Ceiriog Valley, Chirk North, Chirk South, Coedpoeth, Esclusham, Gwenfro, Johnstown, Llangollen Rural, Marchwiell, Minera, New Broughton, Overton, Pant, Penycae, Penycae and Ruabon South, Plas Madoc, Ponciau, Ruabon.

CLWYD WEST COUNTY CONSISTUENCY (55,381) **Conwy County** electoral Divisions: Abergele Pensarn, Bwtws yn Rhos, Colwyn, Eirias, Gele, Glyn, Kinmel Bay, Llanddulas, Llandrillo yn Rhos, Llangernyw, Llansannan, Llysfaen, Mochdre, Pentre Mawr, Rhiw, Towyn, Uwchaled, **Denbighshire County** electoral divisions: Efenechtyd, Llanarmon-yn-Ial/Llandegla, Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd/Llangynhafal, Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gweddelwern, Llanrhaedr-yng-Nghinmeirch, Ruthin.

CONWY COUNTY CONSTITUENCY (43,976) **Conwy County** electoral divisions: Betws-y-Coed, Bryn, Caerhun, Capelulo, Conwy, Craig-y-Don, Crwst, Deganwy, Eglwysbach, Gogarth, Gower, Llansanffraid, Marl, Mostyn, Pandy, Pant-yr-afon/Penmaenan, Penrhyn, Pensarn, Trefriw, Tudno, Uwch Conwy

DELYN COUNTY CONSTITUENCY (54,277) **Flintshire County** electoral divisions: Argoed, Bagillt East, Bagillt West, Brynford, Caerwys, Cilcain, Ffynnongroyw, Flint Castle, Flint Coleshill, Flint Oakenholt, Flint Trelawney, Greenfield, Gronant, Gwernaffield, Gwernymynydd, Halkyn, Holywell Central, Holywell East, Holywell West, Leeswood, Mold Broncoed, Mold East, Mold South, Mold West, Mostyn, New Brighton, Northop, Northop Hall, Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor, Whitford.

VALE OF CLWYD COUNTY CONSTITUENCY (49,637) **Denbighshire County** electoral divisions: Bodelwyddan, Denbigh Central, Denbigh Lower, Denbigh Upper/Henllan, Dyserth, Llandyrnog, Prestatyn Central, Prestatyn East, Prestatyn Meliden, Prestatyn North, Prestatyn South West, Rhuddlan, Rhyl East,

Rhyl South, Rhyl South East, Rhyl South West, Rhyl West, St Asaph East, St. Asaph West, Trefnant, Tremeirchion.

WREXHAM COUNTY CONSTITUENCY (50,890) **Wrexham County** electoral divisions: Acton, Borrass Park, Brynyffynnon, Cartrefle, Erddig, Garden Village, Gresford East and West, Grosvenor, Gwersyllt East and South, Gwersyllt North, Gwersyllt West, Hermitage, Holt, Little Acton, Llay, Maesydre, Marford and Hoseley, Offa, Queensway, Rhosnesni, Rossett, Smithfield, Stansty, Whitegate, Wynnstay.

Representations made to the Commission and to the Joint Local Inquiry.

25. The Commission received a substantial number of communications commenting on its provisional recommendations for Gwynedd and Clwyd. In the light of these submissions the Commission were required to hold local inquiries into these proposed changes in the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd. Normally it would be appropriate to conduct a local inquiry in relation to the proposals for a single preserved county. However, in view of the number of objections received in respect of the proposals concerning the current Gwynedd constituencies which request that the existing arrangements for the area be retained, notwithstanding the fact that two existing constituencies are partly in Gwynedd and partly in Clwyd, the Commission decided to hold a joint local inquiry into its proposals for Gwynedd and Clwyd.
26. The local inquiry sat in Bangor on 6th July 2004 and in Ruthin on 8th July 2004. I heard oral submissions and evidence from the following:

Mr. Hywel Williams, the Member of Parliament for Caernarfon.

Mr. Iwan Evans, (on behalf of Gwynedd County Council).

Mr. Gwyn Hughes, (on behalf of the City of Bangor Council).

Mrs. Phyllis Ellis, (on behalf of Llanddeiniolen Community Council).

Mr. Paul Williams (on behalf of Bangor Labour Party).

Councillor Charles Ellis LL.B.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley.

Mr. Roger Pratt CBE, Mr. David Ian Jones, Mr. Guto Bebb, Mr. J.V.R. Anderson. OBE, DL, Mrs. Mair Reeves and Mrs. Anne Roberts (variously on behalf of the Welsh Conservative Party, North Wales and Mid and West Wales Conservatives and the Conservative Associations of Alyn and Deeside, Caernarfon, Clwyd South, Clwyd West, Conwy, Delyn, Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, Vale of Clwyd, Wrexham and Ynys Môn.)

Mr. David Costa, (on behalf of the Wales Labour Party).

Ms. Donna Hutton, (on behalf of Conwy Constituency Labour Party).

Mr. David Taylor, (on behalf of Clwyd West Constituency Labour Party).

Councillor Lloyd Davies, (on behalf of Denbighshire County Council).

Mr. Ian Miller, (on behalf of Denbighshire County Council).

I also received a letter from the Rt. Hon. Lord Roberts of Conwy.

27. It is convenient to consider in turn the response to the provisional recommendations for Gwynedd and Clwyd.

(1) Gwynedd.

28. The Commission's provisional recommendations in respect of Gwynedd have received the support of the Welsh Conservative Party, the Wales Labour Party, the Welsh Liberal Democrats, the Caernarfon Constituency Labour Party and Conwy Conservatives. In addition, the Commission has received letters supporting its provisional recommendations from Councillor H. Eifon Jones (Isle of Anglesey County Council) and three individuals. Plaid Cymru is generally supportive of the recommendations in respect of Gwynedd but it makes a qualification in respect of the boundary between the new Arfon CC and the new Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC observing that there is a need to ensure that the boundary reflects faithfully local community connections. It indicates that its local officers will write to the Commission to deal with this matter more specifically.

29. Llanystumdwy Community Council did not wish to comment until after the report of the Richard Commission is published. In addition Gwynedd Council objected to the

provisional recommendations on the ground that any review of Parliamentary boundaries should await the report of the Richard Commission. A number of those who oppose the provisional recommendations have also submitted that in any event the review should await the outcome of the Richard Commission; these include four Community Councils, two local branches of Plaid Cymru, Mrs. Betty Williams MP and a number of individuals. Plaid Cymru has also suggested that it would be wise to await the recommendations of the Richard Commission before coming to the final decision on boundary changes.

30. The principal objections to the Commission's provisional recommendations may be summarised as follows.

- (1) There is substantial opposition to the creation of the proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd Constituency based on the size of the constituency, difficulties in travel and communications, the absence of a focal point and differences in interests and outlook between the people of Dwyfor and Meirionnydd. This opposition comes from Gwynedd County Council, Caernarfon Royal Town Council, Criccieth Town Council, Porthmadog Town Council, Pwllheli Town Council, some 13 Community Councils⁴, particularly those in Llyn, Caernarfon Liberal Democrats, two local branches of Plaid Cymru and a number of individuals.
- (2) Some nine Community Councils and Caernarfon Royal Town Council, two local branches of Plaid Cymru and a substantial number of individuals object that the natural connection between Dwyfor and Caernarfon would be broken by the creation of the new constituencies of Arfon CC and Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC. They also argue that there is little connection between Dwyfor and Meirionnydd. They draw attention to the fact that the natural transport links are between Llyn, Dwyfor and Caernarfon and attach great importance on the historical link with Caernarfon which would be broken by the proposals.

- (3) Three Community Councils, two Bangor councillors and a substantial number of individuals oppose the inclusion of Caernarfon and Bangor in the same constituency on the ground of a lack of natural connection. This objection was supported by a petition with 127 signatures originating from Bangor. Councillor P.A. Williams of Bangor also suggested that placing Caernarfon and Bangor in the same constituency would significantly harm Bangor's prospects for economic growth.
- (4) Three Community Councils have argued that the provisional recommendations would result in an imbalance between town and country within the proposed Arfon constituency. In particular, concern is expressed that the centre of the constituency would move from Caernarfon to Bangor to the detriment of the country areas and that the nature of the constituency would change.
- (5) Five Community Councils object on the grounds that the provisional recommendations show a lack of respect for the history and traditions of the area.
- (6) Mrs. Betty Williams, the Member of Parliament for Conwy, objects to the proposals on the basis of the low electorate in the proposed constituencies.
- (7) Mrs. Betty Williams, the Member of Parliament for Conwy, further objects to the proposals on the grounds that they would break ties within the existing Conwy CC and within the existing Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC.
- (8) Further objection has been made that the Commission's proposals would dilute the representation of agricultural interests.

⁴ Aberdaron, Beddgelert, Bontnewydd, Buan, Dolbenmaen, Llanbedrog, Llanberis, Llanddeiniolen, Llandwrog, Llanengan, Llanllyfni, Llannor, Llanwnda

- (9) Ten Community Councils and the City of Bangor Council have opposed the provisional recommendations on the ground that there is no good reason for change.
- (10) One individual has proposed an alternative name for the proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd Constituency.
- (11) A number of those who have made submissions to the Commission object to the inclusion of Dwyfor and Meirionnydd in the Mid and West Wales Region for the purposes of Assembly elections. In addition Plaid Cymru has expressed concern at the size of the proposed Mid and West Wales region.

31. A number of counter-proposals have been made including the following:

- (1) A number of individuals have proposed that Bangor and those parts of the current Conwy CC which remain in Gwynedd should be incorporated in the existing Caernarfon CC which should be retained in this modified form.
- (2) A substantial number of objectors, including ten Community Councils, Bangor Council, two Bangor councillors and a substantial number of individuals have proposed that the status quo be retained. This is supported by a petition with 127 names originating from Bangor.

(2) Clwyd

32. The principal responses to the Commission's provisional recommendations may be summarised as follows:

- (1) There is widespread support for the Commission's provisional recommendations in respect of Clwyd. The Welsh Conservative Party, Wales Labour Party, the Welsh Liberal Democrats, Conwy Conservatives and Clwyd West Constituency Labour Party support the proposals for Clwyd. The Vale of Clwyd Constituency Labour Party expressed their support for the Commission's proposals for the Vale of Clwyd CC. A

number of local MPs and AMs and political groupings in various Councils have expressed their approval for the whole or specific parts of the proposals for Clwyd. Denbighshire County Council supports the recommendations for Parliamentary constituencies in its area, subject to the question of names. Conwy County Borough Council, Llandudno Town Council, Aberconwy Branch Labour Party and Conwy Constituency Labour Party support the recommendations, subject to the question of names. Furthermore, subject to the question of names, the written responses of individuals have in general been supportive of the Commission's provisional recommendations.

- (2) The Welsh Conservative Party, Wales Labour Party, Welsh Liberal Democrats, Conwy Conservatives, Conwy County Borough Council, Llandudno Town Council Aberconwy Branch Labour Party and Conwy Constituency Labour Party expressly support the provisional recommendations in respect of the new Conwy CC, subject in some cases to the question of its name. These provisional recommendations are also supported by a number of individuals. However, they are opposed by Mrs. Betty Williams MP, the Member of Parliament for Conwy CC.
- (3) The Welsh Conservative Party and Conwy Conservatives, whilst supporting the proposals for Conwy CC, have suggested that if it was felt necessary to increase the electorate of the Conwy Constituency this could be achieved by including the electoral divisions of Llangernyw and Uwchaled in Conwy CC rather than in Clwyd West CC. However, they do not propose this.
- (4) One correspondent has made alternative proposals involving one Conwy and one Denbigh Constituency and suggesting that Flintshire and Wrexham should have four constituencies - Flint, Mold, Caergwrle and Wrexham. However, there was no further support for this proposal.

- (5) Such objections as have been received in writing are, for the most part, concerned with the proposed names for the various constituencies in Clwyd.

The Richard Commission.

33. A number of individuals and bodies who submitted written representations in response to the provisional recommendations of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales stated that any consideration of boundaries for constituencies and the Welsh Assembly Electoral regions would be premature and should await the report of the Richard Commission. By the date of the local inquiry the Richard Commission had completed its work and had published its report. A number of those who made oral submissions at the local inquiry urged that no further action should be taken in relation to the current review until it was known what changes might take place in the light of the recommendations of the Richard Commission. The point was made that changes consequential on the current review may have to be changed again shortly thereafter.

34. The Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales is subject to a statutory duty to complete the current review within a fixed period. Those recommendations of the Richard Commission which might impinge on the subject matter of this review would require primary legislation. There can be no certainty as to whether, and if so when, its recommendations might be implemented. In these circumstances, the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales has no alternative but to complete its current review.

Analysis

35. For reasons which will become apparent I consider that it is appropriate to address the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd in turn.

(1) Gwynedd.

(a) Number of constituencies.

36. The theoretical entitlement of Gwynedd is 2.55 seats. It is the provisional recommendation of the Commission that the number of constituencies in Gwynedd should be three.

37. The only opposition to this provisional recommendation of the Commission comes from those who seek to maintain the status quo i.e. the allocation of four constituencies to Gwynedd, two of which would extend beyond the borders of the preserved county to include substantial areas of the preserved county of Clwyd.

38. The substantial reduction in the theoretical entitlement of Gwynedd since the last general review is due in very large measure to the transfer of substantial parts of the existing constituencies of Conwy CC and Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC to the preserved county of Clwyd. In addition there has been a steady decrease in the electorate of the preserved county of Gwynedd as currently constituted from 145,304 in 1999 to 141,652 in 2003, a decrease of 2.5%. On the basis that there is to be no departure from Rule 4, the Commission is clearly correct in its conclusion that the number of constituencies in Gwynedd should be reduced from four to three. The allocation of three seats to Gwynedd notwithstanding the theoretical entitlement of 2.55 is entirely justified, should further justification be required, by its geographical character.

(b) Ynys Môn.

39. The Commission proposes to leave the existing constituency of Ynys Môn CC unchanged.

40. There has been no opposition to this proposal.

41. The good sense of the recommendation is obvious. The island of Anglesey with a 2003 electorate of 49,831 (5.54% above the county average) and an area of 74,891 hectares is a natural unit suited by reason of its electorate, size and geography to

constitute a single constituency. The constituency of Ynys Môn also has the advantage of being coterminous with the Isle of Anglesey County Council.

(c) Arfon and Dwyfor Merionnydd.

42. The most controversial aspect of the provisional recommendations of the Commission in respect of Gwynedd and Clwyd has been its proposal to divide the remainder of the preserved county of Gwynedd into two constituencies to be known as Arfon CC and Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC. This has resulted in two principal counter-proposals:

(1) The addition of Bangor and those parts of the current Conwy CC which remain in Gwynedd to the current Caernarfon CC which should be retained.

(2) The retention of the status quo.

43. Opposition to the Commission's provisional recommendations in respect of Arfon and Dwyfor Meirionnydd has been directed principally at the inclusion of Caernarfon and Bangor in the same constituency, the severing of ties between Dwyfor and Caernarfon and the nature of the proposed new constituency of Dwyfor Meirionnydd.

44. A number of interested parties have argued that there are fundamental differences of character and interest between Bangor and Caernarfon which make them unsuitable for inclusion in the same constituency. The City of Bangor Council made a written submission objecting to the proposals on the ground that the existing arrangements had served the City of Bangor well in the past and that there was no compelling reason to change them. At the local inquiry, Mr. Gwyn Hughes, the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Council, explained that the members of the Council considered that Bangor's social, economic and cultural ties were with the more urban coastal areas to the east rather than with Caernarfon and the rural areas to the west. He complained that Bangor is not well served by the Gwynedd County Council where it loses out to the rural areas and that the interests of Bangor would be better served by the preservation of the existing link with Conwy. Councillor P.A. Williams City of Bangor Council, contended that placing Bangor and Caernarfon in the same constituency would significantly harm Bangor's prospects for further economic growth. Councillor Charles Ellis LL.B., City of Bangor Council, drew attention to the

differences between Bangor and Gwynedd and produced a petition with 127 signatures opposing the provisional recommendations. A number of interested parties from further west have also argued that it would be undesirable to include Bangor and Caernarfon in the same constituency. Thus, for example, Bontnewydd Community Council refers to differences in character. Llanwnda Community Council contends that Caernarfon and Bangor have not worked well together and that it would be a mistake to link the two in the same constituency.

45. On the other hand, a number of interested parties hold a different view of the relationship of Bangor and Caernarfon. In particular, Mr. Guto Bebb, who appeared at the local inquiry, drew attention to the various links between Bangor and its surrounding area and Bangor's importance as a business, educational, shopping and entertainment centre and as a centre for medical treatment. Others at the local inquiry suggested that the claims as to the differences between Bangor and Caernarfon were over-stated. In this regard, it should also be noted that a number of individuals who made written submissions proposed that Bangor and the areas currently in the Conwy CC which are within the retained county of Gwynedd should be added to the existing Caernarfon CC.

46. There are undoubtedly differences in character and outlook between Bangor and Caernarfon. However, I consider that it is possible to exaggerate these differences and that the two communities have much more in common than some would suggest. In the same way, I doubt that there exists a complete identity of interest and outlook between Bangor and the urban communities to the east. Moreover, while many rural communities in Gwynedd have historic links with Caernarfon they inevitably look to Bangor for the provision of many services which Caernarfon does not provide. In particular, Bangor provides business, shopping and entertainment facilities which are not available elsewhere in Gwynedd. There are also educational links between Bangor and its surrounding area. Bangor is a natural focal point. In my opinion, it is entirely appropriate that it should form part of the proposed Arfon constituency.

47. I do not consider that Bangor would be disadvantaged if included in the proposed Arfon constituency. Bangor would be the largest community in the new constituency. The elected member would be bound to represent the interests of all constituents and could not possibly disregard the interests of the people of Bangor. Similarly, there is in my view no basis for the suggestion that Bangor's prospects for future economic growth would be prejudiced by its inclusion in the proposed Arfon constituency.
48. Precisely the opposite fear has been expressed in certain quarters. Thus Llanllyfni Community Council, for example, has suggested that the centre of gravity of the constituency would shift from Caernarfon to Bangor and that this would act to the detriment of the rural areas. While the proposals would include Bangor as an important urban centre in the Arfon constituency, I consider that the Arfon constituency would retain a strong rural aspect and there is no reason to fear that as a result the representation of rural communities would be any less effective.
49. The Commission's provisional recommendations would sever Dwyfor from Arfon and link it to Meirionnydd in the new constituency of Dwyfor Meirionnydd. This aspect of the proposals has attracted considerable local opposition. It should be noted, however, that the opposition to this proposal has come predominantly from Dwyfor, and to a lesser extent from Arfon, but not from Meirionnydd.
50. One aspect of this proposal, acknowledged by the Commission in the Report containing its provisional recommendations⁵, is that it may weaken the long established ties between the town of Caernarfon and the former county of Caernarvonshire. This is certainly a matter which has featured large in many of the written submissions which the Commission has since received. These written submissions also place particular emphasis on the natural links and transport links between Dwyfor and Caernarfon.
51. Another aspect of the proposal is whether it is desirable to join Dwyfor and Meirionnydd in this way and the practicality of effective representation of the

⁵ Paragraph 7.6.

electorate in the proposed new constituency. These objections are based on the size of the proposed new constituency and the difficulty of travel and communications. It is contended that there is no central town to provide a focus for the constituency. It is suggested that the creation of the proposed constituency would impede the effective representation of the people and would increase apathy in the electorate. It is also contended that the people of Dwyfor have no real connection with the people of Meirionnydd.

52. It has been suggested that the size, nature and shape of the proposed constituency make it an impracticable unit for effective representation. The proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd constituency would have an area of 218,605 hectares. This would be larger in area than the existing Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC (199,814 hectares) and would be considerably larger in area than either of the other proposed Gwynedd constituencies or the proposed new Conwy constituency.⁶ If the Commission's provisional recommendations for Wales were all implemented Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC would be the second largest constituency in Wales in area after the much larger Brecon and Radnorshire CC (301,462 hectares) and roughly comparable with Montgomeryshire CC (218,154 hectares). In this regard it is significant that the 2003 electorate of Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC would be 48,823, again roughly comparable with that of Montgomeryshire CC (46,655) but considerably less than that of Brecon and Radnorshire CC (53,497). The 2003 electorate of Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC would be 3.4% above the preserved county average but considerably below the 2003 electoral quota (55,640). In these circumstances and having regard in particular to the size of the electorate and its relationship to the electoral quota, I do not consider that the size of the proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC would be disproportionate or would be such as to impede effective representation of its electorate.

⁶

Arfon CC	43,626 hectares
Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC	218,605 hectares
Ynys Môn CC	74,891 hectares
Conwy CC	62,263 hectares

53. Transport links in the proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC do not appear to me to be significantly worse than those in comparable parts of North Wales. While roads in Llyn tend to radiate from Caernarfon, Llyn also has effective road links with Porthmadog and Meirionnydd. The railway between Pwllheli and Aberdyfi is also a valuable means of transport within the proposed constituency. Transport links within the proposed constituency are, in my view, no worse than those within the existing Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC. However, it seems to me that criticism of the proposal on the basis of inadequate transport links may, to a certain extent, be based on a misconception. A number of those who made written or oral submissions considered that the new constituency would have its focal point in Dolgellau and pointed to the difficulties of traveling there from Llyn. While Dolgellau can hardly be regarded as central in the new constituency it seems improbable that it would be its focal point. It seems far more likely that that role would be assumed by Porthmadog which is centrally placed. In any event, the elected member could be expected to hold regular surgeries in different parts of his constituency just as the present member for Caernarfon CC holds surgeries in Pwllheli, Porthmadog and many of the villages, in addition to Caernarfon. Accordingly, I do not consider that the existing transport facilities in the area are likely to impede effective representation of the electorate.

54. The electorate of the proposed constituency would be made up in two roughly equal parts by the people of Dwyfor (approximately 22,000) and Meirionnydd (approximately 26,000). In my opinion, claims as to the differences in outlook and interests of the people of Dwyfor and Meirionnydd can easily be exaggerated. Setting to one side the friendly rivalries between the two areas, it seems to me that there is far more which unites the people of Dwyfor and Merionnydd than which divides them. Both areas are largely rural with strong agricultural interests and an increasing dependence on tourism. There are strong cultural ties between the two districts, in particular those based on the Welsh language. There are also educational links between the districts including Coleg Dwyfor Merionnydd which operates in Pwllheli and Dolgellau. In my opinion there is here a community of interest which makes it entirely appropriate that they should be within the same constituency.

55. It must be a matter of regret that the proposal will inevitably weaken to some extent the historical links between Dwyfor and Caernarfon. However, it is simply not possible to accommodate the entire former county of Caernarvonshire within a single constituency and therefore some division is inevitable.
56. In my opinion, there is no reason to suppose that the representation of agricultural interests would be significantly diluted as a result of the Commission's proposals.
57. The Commission's provisional recommendations in respect of the proposed constituencies of Arfon and Dwyfor Meirionnydd have the advantage that they are based on the former district council areas. In addition, both constituencies would fall entirely within the same local authority. Although there would be a discrepancy between the electorates of the two constituencies (Arfon: 42,998 and Dwyfor Merionnydd: 48,823) this is acceptable. It would be possible to balance the electorates by transferring certain electoral divisions from Dwyfor Meirionnydd to Arfon. However, I consider that the present proposal is preferable because it employs familiar units.
58. For these reasons I consider that the Commission's provisional recommendations in respect of Arfon and Dwyfor Meirionnydd are practicable and likely to achieve effective representation of their respective electorates.
59. The principal counter-proposal in respect of Arfon and Dwyfor Meirionnydd which does not involve a departure from Rule 4 is that Bangor and those parts of the current Conwy CC which remain in Gwynedd should be incorporated in the existing Caernarfon CC which should be retained in this modified form. This has been proposed by a number of individuals. However, there has been no support for this proposal from any of the local councils or from any of the political parties or branches which have made representations.
60. Those who have made this proposal have not in their written submissions addressed the question of the size of the electorate in the proposed constituency or the likely

impact of the proposal on other constituencies. On the basis that the resulting constituencies should conform with Rule 4, it seems that the proposal would result in the retention of the current Ynys Môn CC and the retention of Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC without those parts which are now in Clwyd. None of those who support this proposal has objected to the Commission's proposal to create a new constituency, to be known as Conwy CC, comprising those parts of the current Conwy CC and Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC which are now in Clwyd.

61. On this basis, the 2003 electorates of the resulting constituencies, calculated by reference to the electorates of the existing constituencies, would be as follows:

Ynys Môn CC		49,831
Caernarfon CC	47,065	
Conwy CC (part)	<u>18,004</u>	
	<u>65,069</u>	65,069
Conwy CC (part)	37,005	
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC (part)	<u>6,971</u>	
	43,976	43,976
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC (part)		26,752

The disparity among these seats and among the seats within the preserved county of Gwynedd would be 38,371.

The 2003 electorates of the proposed constituencies within the preserved county of Gwynedd would range from 43.34% below the county average (the new Meirionnydd constituency) to 37.81% above average (the new Caernarfon constituency).

62. In my opinion this disparity would be wholly unacceptable. The 2003 electorate of the new Caernarfon constituency would be substantially larger than that of the largest current constituency in North Wales (Alyn and Deeside CC: 60,331) and considerably in excess of the electoral quota (55,640). The 2003 electorate of the new Meirionnydd constituency would be considerably smaller than that of the smallest current

constituency in North Wales (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC: 33,723) and less than half of the electoral quota (55,640).

63. Any attempt to redraw the boundary between the new Caernarfon constituency and the new Meirionnydd constituency so as to balance their respective electorates would be likely to resemble very closely the Commission's current provisional recommendations for its proposed Arfon CC and Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC. Those proposals utilise the Gwynedd County Council Area Committee areas of Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd (the former District Council areas). No other basis for balancing the electorates of the proposed new Caernarfon and Meirionnydd constituencies now under consideration immediately suggests itself. Certainly none has been proposed.

64. The alternative counter-proposal, the retention of the status quo, would involve a departure from Rule 4 in respect of both Conwy CC and Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC. While the Rules set out in the Schedule to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 incorporate a measure of flexibility, it is clear that Parliament attached considerable importance to the desirability of confining a constituency to a single county. The provisional recommendations of the Commission demonstrate that it is practicable to allocate to Gwynedd three constituencies which do not trespass beyond the boundaries of the preserved county. The disparity within Gwynedd under the Commission's proposals (6,833) would be considerably less than under the existing arrangements (21,286). (See paragraphs 1 and 15 above.) Accordingly, Rule 5 could not justify a departure from the strict application of Rule 4 in order to avoid excessive disparity. Rule 6 permits a departure from the strict application of Rule 4 if special geographical considerations, including the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency, appear to the Commission to render a departure desirable. However, for the reasons stated above, I consider that geographical considerations would not justify such a departure in the present case. As for the inconveniences attendant on alterations of constituencies and the breaking of local ties, I consider that the specific provisions in Rule 7(a) and (b) probably have no application here because the alterations are made for the purposes of Rule 4. However, the Commission retains a

general discretion under Rule 7. Nevertheless, and in any event, for the reasons set out in this Report I have come to the conclusion that the Commission would not be justified in departing from Rule 4 in the case of the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd.

Names of constituencies.

65. The Commission has received a proposal from Mr. Liam Pennington that the new constituency in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd be named Dwyfor Meirionnydd a Phen Llyn CC. There has been no other support for the proposal. I consider that the Commission's proposal that the constituency be named Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC is preferable as it balances the two elements of the constituency and employs the names of the former District Council areas

66. In his submissions to the local inquiry Mr. Dafydd Wigley observed that the Commission's proposals would end the link of many centuries between Caernarfon and the name of a Parliamentary constituency. However, he did not propose the retention of the name Caernarfon CC for the proposed Arfon constituency. While sharing Mr. Wigley's sadness at this break with the past, I consider that given the significant differences between the existing Caernarfon CC and the proposed Arfon constituency the name Arfon CC is preferable as it accurately reflects the area comprising the constituency.

Further considerations.

67. For the reasons set out above I agree with the provisional recommendation of the Commission in respect of the preserved county of Gwynedd. In particular, I consider that the Commission would not be justified in departing from Rule 4 in the case of the preserved county of Gwynedd so as to permit the retention of the status quo. However, before leaving the Commission's proposals in respect of Gwynedd I should refer to one further matter.

68. In view of the considerable local opposition to the Commission's provisional recommendations for Gwynedd and support for the preservation of the status quo I

should make clear my view that before the Commission could recommend the preservation of the status quo, involving two constituencies which were partly in Gwynedd and partly in Clwyd, it would be necessary to carry out an analysis of those proposals in the context of the entire preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd considered in conjunction.

69. Gwynedd and Clwyd currently have ten constituencies. On the provisional recommendations of the Commission Gwynedd and Clwyd would retain ten constituencies (three and seven respectively, on the basis of theoretical entitlements of 2.55 and 6.57 respectively). However, if one considers the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd in conjunction the total 2003 electorate would be 507,345⁷. When divided by the electoral quota of 55,640 this produces a theoretical entitlement of 9.12 seats.

70. I consider that it would be extremely difficult for the Commission to justify the allocation of ten seats to Gwynedd and Clwyd, when considered in conjunction, on the basis of a theoretical entitlement of 9.12.⁸

71. None of those who has made submissions in response to the provisional recommendations has suggested that the number of constituencies in Gwynedd and Clwyd should be reduced to nine and it is clear that any such proposal would be widely opposed.

72. The reduction of the number of constituencies in Gwynedd and Clwyd from ten to nine would require a fundamental reorganisation of constituencies. This would inevitable cause widespread inconvenience and disruption to local ties. Moreover, if

⁷ This includes 1,358 electors in the preserved county of Powys. See note 1 above.

⁸ In this regard I have in mind the Commission's provisional recommendations for the preserved counties of Gwent and Mid Glamorgan where there is a joint theoretical entitlement of 13.19 seats and the Commission has recommended the allocation of 13 seats. I also have in mind the Commission's provisional recommendations in respect of South Glamorgan which involve the retention of the existing five constituencies notwithstanding the theoretical entitlement of 5.84 seats, although in that instance the Commission has clearly been influenced by the inconvenience and disruption to local ties to which the radical recasting of a 6 seat solution would give rise.

there were a reduction in the number of seats and a resulting increase in the average electorate in the two retained counties (56,372 as opposed to 50,735 under the current proposals) it is difficult to see how the retention of the status quo in all four constituencies formerly within Gwynedd⁹ could be justified.

73. Even more fundamentally, in my opinion such a reduction of the total number of constituencies would be a grave disservice to the effective representation of the people of Gwynedd and Clwyd, in particular given the geographical nature of the area.

(2) Clwyd.

(a) Number of constituencies.

74. The preserved county of Clwyd, as constituted at the last general review, had six constituencies with a 2003 electorate of 323,075. In addition, following changes in local government boundaries, the preserved county of Clwyd now includes parts of two further constituencies with electorates of 37,005 (Conwy CC (part)) and 6,971 (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC (part)) bringing the total 2003 electorate to 365,693. The theoretical entitlement of Clwyd is 6.57 seats. It is the provisional recommendation of the Commission that the number of constituencies in Clwyd should be seven.

75. The only opposition of any substance to this provisional recommendation of the Commission comes from those who seek to maintain the status quo i.e. the allocation of four constituencies to Gwynedd, two of which would extend beyond the borders of the preserved county to include substantial areas of the preserved county of Clwyd.

⁹ The 2003 electorates are as follows:

Ynys Môn CC	49,831
Conwy CC	55,009
Caernarfon CC	47,065
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC	33,723

76. On the basis that there is to be no departure from Rule 4, the Commission is clearly correct in its conclusion that the number of constituencies in Clwyd should be seven.

(b) Alyn and Deeside CC, Delyn CC, Wrexham CC.

77. The Commission proposes that there be no change to the boundaries of these constituencies. There has been general support for these proposals.

(c) Clwyd South CC, Clwyd West CC, Vale of Clwyd CC.

78. The Commission proposes that there be minor changes to the boundaries of these constituencies in order to ensure that no electoral division is split between constituencies. There has been general support for these proposals.

(d) Clwyd South CC: Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant /Llansilin electoral division.

79. The Commission proposes that the electoral division of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant/Llansilin should be removed from the Clwyd South constituency and included within a Powys constituency. There has been general support for this proposal and no opposition.

(e) Conwy and Nant Conwy.

80. It is the provisional recommendation of the Commission that those parts of the current Conwy CC and Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC which now fall within the preserved county of Clwyd be combined to create a new constituency to be known as Conwy CC.

81. This recommendation is widely supported. However, it is opposed by Mrs. Betty Williams, the Member of Parliament for Conwy CC who supports the status quo on the grounds that the proposed Arfon CC and the proposed Conwy CC would both have unacceptably low electorates and that ties would be broken, both within the

chain of coastal communities from Conwy to Bangor and between Nant Conwy and Meirionnydd. Reference has been made above to those residents of Bangor who wish to maintain the link with Conwy.

82. In my opinion, the proposed constituency would make a cohesive unit. It would reunite the Vale of Conwy, which under the existing arrangements is split in two. This feature of the proposal has attracted particular support. It would also reflect ties between the coastal towns of Conwy and Llandudno and the Vale of Conwy. Road and rail communications on both sides of the valley are with Conwy, Llandudno and Llandudno Junction. The Conwy Valley naturally looks north to the coast. I consider that the links between Conwy and the Conwy Valley are stronger than those between Conwy and Bangor. The fact that the boundaries of the proposed constituency would be coextensive with those of the former district of Aberconwy is also an advantage because it has local recognition. In my view these factors clearly outweigh the breaking of links between Conwy and other coastal communities and links between Nant Conwy and Meirionnydd.

83. It is also an advantage that the entire constituency would fall within Conwy County Borough.

84. The electorate of the new Conwy CC (43,976) would be comparatively small and would be 11,664 below the electoral quota. Moreover the disparity within the preserved county of Clwyd would be 16,355. However, the size of the electorate would be similar to that of the proposed Arfon CC (42,998) and the proposed Dwyfor Merionnydd CC (48,823).

85. The Welsh Conservative Party has submitted that if it were felt necessary it would be possible to increase the electorate of the proposed Conwy CC by adding the electoral divisions of Llangernyw and Uwchaled, currently in Clwyd West CC, thereby increasing the electorate of Conwy CC to 46,239 and reducing that of Clwyd West CC to 53,118. It is fair to state that this was not a definite proposal, but was merely canvassed as a possibility if the Commission felt a need to reduce the disparity. The

possibility was raised in the same terms by Conwy Conservatives. There was no other support for such a course. However, any such course was vigorously opposed at the local inquiry by Mr. David Taylor, on behalf of the Clwyd West Labour Party, on the ground that this would break the strong links of Uwchaled with Ruthin.

86. I do not consider such a balancing exercise to be necessary. In my view the discrepancy is within acceptable limits and it would be preferable to confine the new constituency to the former district of Aberconwy as the Commission proposes.

87. In my opinion, there are no matters relating to Conwy and Nant Conwy which would justify departing from Rule 4. On the contrary, I consider that the Commission's proposal for the new Conwy CC is entirely practicable and desirable.

88. However, there is a very considerable body of support for the view that the new constituency should not be named Conwy CC. Llandudno Town Council has proposed that the new constituency be known as Aberconwy CC. The same proposal has been made by Aberconwy Branch Labour Party, Conwy Constituency Labour Party and two members of Conwy County Borough Council (Councillor P.C. Evans J.P. and Councillor B. Cossey, the latter representing the Liberal Democrat group).

89. I consider that the name Aberconwy CC is preferable to Conwy CC. The name Conwy is already in use for a Community Council and a County Borough Council, neither of which is coextensive with the proposed constituency. However, the proposed constituency is exactly coextensive with the former district of Aberconwy. The historic name Aberconwy is familiar to members of the public who associate it with the area of the proposed constituency. Furthermore, the use of the name Aberconwy in connection with the new constituency would distinguish between the existing Conwy CC and the proposed new constituency.

90. Accordingly I recommend that the new constituency be named Aberconwy CC.

(f) Names of constituencies in Clwyd.

91. The question of the name to be given to the new Conwy constituency has been addressed above.
92. Councillor P.C. Evans J.P., Conwy County Borough Council, has suggested that the name Clwyd West CC is no longer appropriate in view of the fact that, if the Commission's proposals are implemented, there will lie to the west of that constituency another constituency entirely within the preserved county of Clwyd. Accordingly he has suggested that Clwyd West CC be renamed Clwyd Central CC. The Liberal Democrat group on Conwy County Borough Council, while supporting a change of name for the same reason, considers Clwyd Central CC insufficiently clear and suggests Conwy East/Denbighshire West CC as an alternative. While recognising the logic behind the point, I consider that in this instance considerations of strict accuracy are outweighed by the advantages of continuity. The only proposed changes to the boundaries of the constituency are very minor and in these circumstances a change of name would be undesirable.
93. Denbighshire County Council objects to the use of names for constituencies which, it contends, do not comply with the principles of the Welsh Language Act 1993. Accordingly it proposes that the names of the three constituencies in its area should be changed to the following: De Clwyd - Clwyd South CC, Gorrlewin Clwyd - West Clwyd CC and Dyffryn Clwyd - Vale of Clwyd CC. Although it is not possible to have alternative English and Welsh names for a constituency, Denbighshire County Council maintains that its proposal involves the use of a single bilingual name for each constituency. While it is entirely appropriate that the Welsh language should be used in the names of Welsh constituencies, especially those in predominantly Welsh speaking areas, I am unable to recommend the changes proposed for the following reasons. First, the names proposed are cumbersome and would be inconvenient in use. Secondly, in circumstances where, as here, the boundaries of the constituencies in question are subject to only minor amendments considerations of continuity strongly suggest that the existing names should be maintained unless they have

become inappropriate. Thirdly, the question of the use of the Welsh language in the names of constituencies (and, in particular, the use of such single bilingual names) is a matter which should be addressed generally by the Commission and not on a piecemeal basis.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES ELECTORAL REGIONS.

94. Schedule 1, The Government of Wales Act 1998 requires the Commission to undertake reviews of the Assembly regions at the same time as general reviews of Parliamentary constituencies. Schedule 1 provides that the Assembly constituencies shall be the Parliamentary constituencies in Wales but also provides that there shall be five Assembly electoral regions to each of which is allocated four Assembly seats. Accordingly, in making its recommendations for Parliamentary constituencies the Commission is also making its recommendations for Assembly constituencies. In addition, when the Commission recommends alterations pursuant to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 it is also required to consider whether any alteration in the Assembly electoral regions or in the allocation of seats to the Assembly electoral regions is required in order to give effect to the rules in Schedule 1, paragraph 8, The Government of Wales Act 1998.

95. Rule 2, Schedule 1, paragraph 8, The Government of Wales Act 1998 provides that the regional electorate for an Assembly electoral region shall be as near the regional electorate for each other Assembly electoral region as is reasonably practicable, having regard (where appropriate) to special geographical considerations.

96. The 2003 electorates of the existing Assembly regions are as follows:

North Wales	476,218
Mid and West Wales	409,549
South Wales West	398,546
South Wales Central	478,011

South Wales East	470,878
Total Electorate	2,233,202
Electoral Quota	446,640

97. Under the existing arrangements Meirionnydd Nant Conwy CC forms part of the Mid and West Wales region.
98. The Commission proposes to redefine the North Wales and Mid and West Wales Assembly regions so as to include the proposed Arfon and Conwy constituencies within the North Wales Assembly region and the proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd and Montgomeryshire constituencies within the Mid and West Wales Assembly region.
99. These proposals are supported by the Welsh Conservative Party, the Wales Labour Party and Welsh Liberal Democrats. However, the inclusion of the proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd constituency in the Mid and West Wales Assembly region is opposed by Plaid Cymru, Gwynedd County Council, Denbighshire County Council, Dolbenmaen Community Council, Llanddeiniolen Community Council, Pwllheli Town Council, Llanor branch of Plaid Cymru, Pwllheli branch of Plaid Cymru, Mr. Hywel Williams, the Member of Parliament for Caernarfon CC, and a substantial number of other individuals. Although they do not address the matter expressly, it seems that other Community Councils in Gwynedd which strongly oppose the creation of the proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd constituency would, for similar reasons, also oppose its allocation to the Mid and West Wales region.
100. The opponents of the proposal suggest that the proposed constituency of Dwyfor Meirionnydd should be included in the North Wales region. They contend that Dwyfor and Llyn are essentially a part of North Wales and that they should not be included in the Mid and West Wales Assembly region. They point to the geographical extent of the proposed Mid and West Wales region. They point out that the inclusion of Dwyfor Meirionnydd in the North Wales region would have the advantage that the North Wales region would coincide with the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd and its borders would accord with other administrative boundaries, for

example those of the North Wales Police, the North Wales Economic Forum and the North Wales Tourism Partnership.

101. Dwyfor and Llyn are naturally regarded as a part of North Wales and unhappiness that they should be included in a region bearing the name Mid and West Wales region is therefore entirely understandable. Furthermore, it is unfortunate that the resulting regions will not coincide with some other administrative boundaries. Nevertheless, I consider that Dwyfor and Meirionnydd have much in common with other parts of the proposed Mid and West Wales region. There would be a considerable community of interest within the proposed region, in particular having regard to the preponderant interests of the area in agriculture and tourism. I consider that these common interests within the proposed region make it an appropriate unit for joint representation in the Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that the name of the region would be something of a misnomer. Furthermore, I consider that the apparent anomaly of the inclusion of Dwyfor and Llyn in the Mid and West Wales region is no greater than the current inclusion of Nant Conwy in that region.

102. The size of the proposed Mid and West Wales region is clearly a relevant consideration. However, I consider that its effect is mitigated to a certain extent by the fact that the electorate is slightly under the electoral quota. Under the Commission's proposals the electorates for the regions would be as follows:

North Wales	459,718
Mid and West Wales	426,058
South Wales West	395,717
South Wales Central	480,831
South Wales East	470,878
Total Electorate	2,233,202
Electoral Quota	446,640

103. If the proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd constituency were included in the North Wales region the electorates of the North Wales region and the Mid and West Wales region would be as follows:

North Wales	508,671
Mid and West Wales	377,105

The North Wales region would be 13.89% above the electoral quota and the Mid and West Wales region would be 15.57% below the electoral quota. I consider that this divergence would be unacceptable. Furthermore I do not consider that the divergence in the case of these regions could be justified on the grounds of special geographical considerations.

104. Denbighshire County Council recognises that the inclusion of Dwyfor Merionnydd CC in the North Wales region, a course which it supports, would create a region with an electorate significantly higher than that of other regions. Accordingly it proposes that this should be recognised by the allocation of a fifth seat to the North Wales region. It contends that this could be achieved in one of two ways.

(1) If the Commission's final recommendations are for 41 or 42 constituencies in Wales there would be 21 regional seats. In these circumstances, Denbighshire County Council calls for the additional seat to be allocated to the North Wales region.

(2) If the Commission's final recommendations are for 40 constituencies, it calls for the Government of Wales Act 1998 to be amended to allow 5 seats to be allocated to the North Wales region, and to reduce by one the allocation of the region with the lowest number of electors.

105. In the event that the present review were to result in a total of 41 or 42 constituencies in Wales it would indeed fall to the Commission to allocate one additional seat to one of the regions. In doing so, it would be required to comply with the Rules set out in paragraph 8, Schedule 1, Government of Wales Act 1998 and in particular with Rule (4). I am unable to make any recommendation as to the allocation of that seat. First, the situation addressed is entirely hypothetical. We cannot know what the total number of constituencies in Wales will be following the

current review or what circumstances will then prevail. Secondly, should the situation arise, the Commission in arriving at its decision would be required to have regard to many matters, including those identified in Rule (4), which cannot be foreseen and which are not limited to the preserved counties of Gwynedd and Clwyd and therefore fall outside the scope of this local inquiry.

106. The alternative basis of the proposal of Denbighshire County Council would require primary legislation. This is a matter outside the scope of the current review and certainly outside the scope of this local inquiry. Moreover, before the Commission could take any position on the desirability of any such amendment to the Government of Wales Act 1998 it would have to have regard to many wider considerations including the interest of the entire Assembly electorate.

107. For the reasons set out above, I support the recommendation of the Commission that the proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd CC be included in the Mid and West Wales region.

CONCLUSIONS.

108. For the reasons set out above:

- (1) I support the provisional recommendations of the Commission in respect of the preserved county of Gwynedd;
- (2) I support the provisional recommendations of the Commission in respect of the preserved county of Clwyd save that I recommend that the new constituency to be created from those parts of the current Conwy CC and Merionnydd Nant Conwy CC which are now within the preserved county of Clwyd should be named Aberconwy CC.
- (3) I support the provisional recommendations of the Commission in respect of the allocation of constituencies to the North Wales electoral region and the Mid and West Wales electoral region for the National Assembly for Wales.

DLJ QC