



## MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until 0001hrs  
11<sup>th</sup> January 2012

### **The Boundary Commission for Wales launches its initial consultation today asking people for their views as it shares its initial proposals for Parliamentary constituency boundaries.**

Today, *Boundary Commission for Wales* (the Commission) published comprehensive details of its initial proposals for a revised constituency map. The launch sees the start of a 12 week public consultation period during which the Commission asks people to 'have their say' either by submitting a written representation or by making an oral one at one of five hearings that will take place across Wales.

The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 requires a reduction in the number of UK constituencies from 650 to 600 and for every UK constituency to have an electorate within the range of 72,810 to 80,473. This statutory range is, in all but one case, much larger than current constituency sizes in Wales. Compliance with the legislation requires a reduction in the number of constituencies in Wales from 40 to 30 which is the biggest single change to Wales since the Boundary Commission was created in 1944. There are changes to every constituency in the Commission's Initial Proposals, some of them considerable. The Commission has, however, ensured that the Initial Proposals are fully compliant with the requirements of the legislation.

The Commission points out that, whilst its proposals meet the statutory criteria, it has also taken into account other relevant factors important to Wales, such as: geographical considerations (the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency); local government boundaries; boundaries of existing constituencies and any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies.

Ben Whitestone, Secretary to the Commission, said today, "The Commission has produced a set of initial proposals which meet the requirements of the 2011 Act. It has also taken into account other relevant factors and has sought to identify the solutions most suitable to local needs within Wales. I would emphasise that these are initial proposals and I very much hope that members of the public will participate in the process of consultation which now begins."

The Commission has considered the merits of a number of options. On occasion, apparent solutions have proved not to be viable because they cannot be accommodated within the statutory requirement as to the size of the electorate or because of their knock-on effect on other constituencies. The Commission has sought in its initial proposals to identify the solutions most suitable to local needs within Wales. It wants to hear what people think.

Ben Whitestone went on to say, “Today we are opening the initial consultation. Over the next 12 weeks people may write in or email us to let us know what they think of the Commission’s proposals – whether they accept or object – we are keen to hear people’s views. Where people object - particularly where they can supply counterproposals – the Commission will give full consideration and may amend its proposals accordingly”.

As part of the initial consultation period the Commission is required to hold public hearings, providing an opportunity for people to make oral representations about any of the Commission’s initial proposals and to present any counter-proposals. The locations, venues and dates of the 5 public hearings to be held across Wales are:

Location	Venue	Date
Swansea	The Liberty Stadium	15-16 February 2012
Cardiff	The Millennium Stadium	22-23 February 2012
Wrexham	Glyndwr University	29 February - 1 March 2012
Caernarfon	Celtic Royal Hotel	7-8 March 2012
Llandrindod	The Pavilion	20-21 March 2012

Those wishing to make oral representations at any of the above hearings are requested to contact the Commission by email on [bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk) or by telephone on 029 2039 5031 confirming the preferred date and time they wish to make their representation. The Commission will write to all of those who make a request with further information about the hearings and provide an allocated timeslot. If it is not possible to fit all requested representations at one particular venue, the nearest alternative venue will be offered.

All representations will be published at a later date (in Welsh and English) and a ‘secondary consultation period’ will then take place.

The Commission’s final proposals will be submitted by October 2013.

Full details are available at [www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk](http://www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk).

For media enquiries please contact Marc Evans or Jonathan Ellis on 029 2064 6840 or email [media.bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk).

**ENDS**

## **Notes to editors**

1. The Boundary Commission for Wales ('the Commission') is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body which is responsible for conducting periodic reviews of Parliamentary constituency boundaries in Wales and making recommendations to Parliament for changes.
2. The Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales announced the 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales in March 2011. The Commission's initial proposals were published on 11 January 2012 and this date marks the start of a 12 week consultation.
3. The Commission has summarised its initial proposals as follows:
  - The United Kingdom Electoral Quota is 76,641 with a tolerance of between 95% and 105% of this figure (72,810 and 80,473 respectively). The average electorate of the existing 40 constituencies in Wales is 57,040. There are presently 39 constituencies below the minimum number of electors and one (Cardiff South and Penarth BC) which falls within the statutory range. Under the proposals all constituencies would be within the statutory range with 19 constituencies below the electoral quota and 11 above the electoral quota.
  - The proposed new Parliamentary constituencies are: Menai ac Ynys Môn; Gwynedd; Ceredigion and North Pembrokeshire; South and West Pembrokeshire; Caerfyrddin; Llanelli; Gower and Swansea West; Swansea East; Neath; Aberavon and Ogmore; Bridgend; The Vale of Glamorgan; Cardiff West; Cardiff Central and Penarth; Cardiff East; Caerphilly and Cardiff North; Newport West and Sirhowy Valley; Newport Central; Monmouthshire; Torfaen; Blaenau Gwent; Heads of the Valleys; Rhondda; Pontypridd; South Powys; Glyndwr and North Powys; Wrexham Maelor; Alyn and Deeside; Dee Estuary; and North Wales Coast.
  - 15 existing constituencies would be wholly contained within a new constituency (Alyn and Deeside, Blaenau Gwent, Brecon and Radnorshire, Bridgend, Cardiff West, Ceredigion, Dwyfor Meirionnydd, Llanelli, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, Neath, Rhondda, Torfaen, Vale of Glamorgan, Wrexham and Ynys Mon).
  - Under the proposals six Unitary Authorities would be wholly contained within a new constituency (Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion, the Isle of Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire and Torfaen). In theory there are 7 Unitary Authorities in Wales which fall below the maximum of the statutory electorate range and which therefore could be included wholly within a new constituency. These are Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, the Isle of Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire and Torfaen.
  - There would be six constituencies over 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Caerfyrddin, Ceredigion and North Pembrokeshire, Glyndwr and North Powys, Gwynedd, South and West Pembrokeshire, and South Powys). Three of these constituencies would be between 2,000 and 3,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Caerfyrddin, Ceredigion and North

Pembrokeshire, and Glyndwr and North Powys), and two constituencies would be over 3,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Gwynedd and South Powys).

- 10 of the existing names would be retained.
  - 877 of the 881 electoral divisions in Wales would be wholly contained within a new constituency. It has been considered appropriate to split four electoral divisions in order to adhere to Rules 2 and 5 of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 (Llansamlet, Penycae and Ruabon South, Ponciau and Tremeirchion).
4. The Commission wish to stress that these initial proposals relate solely to Parliamentary constituencies and do not affect the National Assembly for Wales constituencies, the structure or arrangements of local government or the services they provide.
  5. The initial consultation period runs for 12 weeks from 11 January 2012 to 2359hrs 4 April 2012. Representations about the proposals must be received before 5 April 2012. Representations should be sent to the Boundary Commission for Wales, Caradog House, 1-6 St Andrews Place, Cardiff CF10 3BE, fax them to 029 2039 5250, or email them to [bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk).
  6. Both written and oral representations may be made in English or Welsh. The Commission will translate all written representations in order that they are available in Welsh and English. A simultaneous translation service will be available at the public hearings.
  7. Full details about the 2013 review and how to take part are available in the Information booklet available at [www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk](http://www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk).
  8. For other media enquiries please contact Marc Evans or Jonathan Ellis on 029 2064 6840 or email [media.bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk).
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