

BCW/ 2016/ Political parties Meeting

## **BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES**

Minutes of the meeting held at Hastings House, Cardiff, at 2:00pm on Monday 29 February 2016.

### **Present:**

Sir Wyn Williams	Deputy Chair
Professor Robert M <sup>c</sup> Nabb	Commissioner
Mr Paul Loveluck	Commissioner
Mr Steve Halsall	Commission Secretary
Mr Matthew Redmond	Commission Deputy Secretary
Mr Tom Jenkins	Commission Secretariat
Mr Ralph Handscomb	Commission Secretariat
Mr Roger Pratt	Conservative Party
Mr David Minshull	
Mr David Hagedyck	Labour Party
Mr Greg Cook	
Mr Ian Walton	Liberal Democrat Party
Mr Geraint Day	Plaid Cymru

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1. The Deputy Chair opened the meeting.
- 1.2. The Deputy Chair explained that the attendees were invited to the meeting as they satisfied the criteria in Section 9 of Schedule 2A to the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act. The full list of invitees was: The Conservative Party; The Labour Party; The Liberal Democrat Party; Plaid Cymru; and The United Kingdom Independence Party.
- 1.3. Each attendee introduced themselves.

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

- 2.1. There were no apologies for absence.

### **3. Background and Purpose**

- 3.1. The Deputy Chair gave a background to the review and what would be discussed during the meeting.

### **4. Number of Constituencies and Electoral Quota**

- 4.1. The Deputy Chair stated the number of constituencies and the electoral quota for each constituency as set out by the Act.
- 4.2. With a UK electoral quota of 74,769 electors per constituency, the Act returned 29 constituencies to Wales. The Commission will, by law, have to remain within 5%

above or below this figure. The range the Commission will be able to use will therefore be between 71,031 and 78,507 electors per constituency.

## **5. Timetable**

- 5.1. The Deputy Chair set out the timetable foreseen for the review and when the Commission envisages reaching the different milestones of the review.
- Review Launch – March 2016
  - Initial Proposals followed by Consultation period – September 2016
  - Public Hearings – October/ November 2016
  - Secondary Consultation period – February/ March 2017
  - Revised Proposals followed by Consultation – Autumn 2017
  - Final Proposals – September 2018
- 5.2 Attendees of the meeting were content with the timetable as set out but asked the Deputy Chair to confirm that the Members of Parliament and political parties be notified one day in advance of general publication. This was accepted.

## **6. Development of Proposals**

- 6.1. The Deputy Chair stated that the Commission had agreed policies to follow during the review. This would enable the review to retain consistency even if the personnel were to change.
- 6.2. The Commission will consider all rules set out in the Act with regard to the development of proposals. It was stated that although representation had been made to Parliament Anglesey was not exempt from the review.
- 6.3. The Commission would avoid splitting electoral wards and communities where it was possible to do so.
- 6.4. The Commission would not propose a constituency where it was not possible to travel by road throughout that constituency.

## **7. Constituency Names and Designation**

- 7.1. The Commission is required by law to give a Name to each of the constituencies in Wales and the Commission will provide both a name and an alternative language name where necessary.
- 7.2. The Commission will use Compass points if necessary in the constituency names.
- 7.3. The representative of the Liberal Democrat Party expressed his opinion that the Commission should avoid using the same names as the National Assembly for Wales's constituencies. The Commission stated that it would adhere to the policy of the last review on naming constituencies but alternative names could be suggested by anyone during the consultation period.
- 7.4. The representative for Plaid Cymru asked if the Commission would be taking into account the possibility of local government reorganisation whilst undertaking the review. The Commission stated that any new principal authorities would not have been created by the time the Commission reports in September 2018.

## **8. Public Hearings**

- 8.1. The Commission will again use Assistant Commissioners to run each Public Hearing, these hearings will be held bilingually.
- 8.2. The political party representatives all expressed their feeling that the Assistant Commissioners did an excellent job running the Public Hearings at the last review.
- 8.3. There will be five hearings throughout Wales.

- 8.4. The Deputy Chair stated that during the last review hearings were held in Cardiff, Swansea, Caernarfon, Wrexham and Llandrindod Wells. The Commission would consider whether to retain the same centres and venues or to use different venues. The Commission will also consider holding a hearing further west during this review.
- 8.5. The Commission stated that they intended to allow political parties to make extended representations at the first and last Public Hearings held in Wales.
- 8.6. The political parties expressed the desire for the Public Hearings not to clash with the principal Public Hearings in England.

## 9. Consultations

- 9.1. The Deputy Chair stated that the Commission was collaborating with the other Boundary Commissions within the UK to set up an online consultation portal in time for the consultation period following the publication of the Initial Proposals.
- 9.2. The Commission expressed a desire to keep printing of reports to a minimum.
- 9.3. The Commission requested that the political parties email the Commission to express in which format they would like to receive copies of reports i.e. language preference, and either electronic or printed.

## 10. Any Further Questions

- 10.1. The representative from the Conservative Party asked for an actual September date for publication of the Initial Proposals. The Commission stated that as soon as a date had been agreed upon it would be announced.
- 10.2. The representative from the Liberal Democrat Party asked would the Commission be using the last set of proposals as a basis for the review. The Commission would be using the information and representations, however it would be unlikely to be able to use the same proposals due to a number of factors namely the shift in electorate and the number of constituencies dropping from 30 to 29.
- 10.3. The representative from the Labour Party asked if the Commission would be using Polling district information and if so would that information be published? The Commission stated that this information would not be used as it was not readily available to the Commission - and that the Commission would not intend to split electoral wards in the review anyway. If the Commission is to split an electoral ward it would do so by the communities which constitute that ward.
- 10.4. The representative for the Conservative Party asked if it was possible to see the community makeup of each electoral ward. The Commission stated that this information was publicly available.

The meeting closed at 15:10.