



Comisiwn Ffiniau
i Gymru

Boundary Commission
for Wales

Boundary Commission
for Wales

Public Hearings: Cardiff

Transcript of the Public Hearing

Cardiff AM

Key

Chair:	Chair	AM:	Arun Midah
GD:	Geraint Davies	GC:	Greg Cook
SP:	Steven Phillips	PR:	Pete Rogers
RP:	Roger Pratt	AC:	Andrew Clemes
JL:	Joe Lock	T:	Tristan

[Transcript starts at 00:00:00]

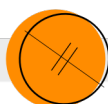
Chair: ...will receive precisely the same consideration as those made orally at any of the public hearings, and that anyone who speaks at a hearing may make additional representations in writing if they wish to do so. Written representations, where possible, should contain the same basic information that I'll be seeking from each speaker this morning, namely your name; your town or area of residence; and you affiliation if you are speaking..., and also, whether you're speaking on behalf of your group and, if so, which group. Representations must be received during the consultation period. Any representations received after the period has closed will not be considered by the Assistant Commissioners in preparation for their, of their report. Representations can be made on our consultation portal, in writing or via email. All the necessary information can be found on our website.

The purpose of this public hearing is to provide an opportunity for people to make representations about any of our initial proposals relating to parliamentary constituencies in Wales, including the naming of con... any constituency and to present any counterproposals. Please bear in mind that any new proposals, suggested revisions, or alterations to initial scheme must comply with the same requirements laid down for the, for the, for us as a Commission as set out in the Parliamentary Constituencies 1986 Act as amended. More detail of the legislation is set out in our initial proposals and guide to review. Copies are available at the desk outside and online.

This hearing is the first of five that's being held across various parts of Wales during this period of consultation with flexible hours that should enable all those who wish to make representations to do so. The transcript of the representations made at these hearings, together with all the representations received during the secondary period by the Commission, will be published in due course on our BCW website. We will of course make the necessary redactions to ensure that private individuals are not identifiable. If you're here today and you've not booked a speaking slot and wish to contribute, please make yourself known to one of the officials and we will allocate you a speaking slot. Our officials are wearing the BCW facemasks.

[00:02:07]

So, I'll conduct this hearing as informally as circumstances permit but there are certain requirements which we shall all need to conform. All speakers will come to the lectern to make representations and we'll make sure that the lectern is sanitised after each speaker, you'll be required to give your name, area of residence and affiliation if you have any; and please note that all representations will be recorded for transcription purposes, so please do speak clearly and slowly so that your submission can be we..., be well understood and recorded. I do not



propose to allow for cross examination of your presentation, however I will permit questions seeking clarification on a particular point to be asked but only through myself as chair. Any such questioner will be asked to supply the same personal details as those making representations.

There's a running order of speakers that we shall endeavour to keep to however we may need to change the order from time to time. To facilitate the hearing and our task for today, please keep to your allotted time allowance or risk being stopped halfway through; indicate to which area or areas your representation relates; help us by telling us why you are making a proposal not merely what the proposal is. Please try not to repeat the detailed submissions of others. If you wish to support a previous speaker's proposal or representation, please say so, so we won't have to go through the same details all over again. Please be aware that we will not be accepting any representations that are concerned with objecting to the rules laid down in statute rather than the initial proposals of the Commission. It is not the purpose of this hearing to discuss the Act that's been passed by parliament and in any event, we do not have any powers to make any recommendations particularly around numbers of members of parliament. You are free to address the hearing in Welsh or English as you choose, but please do state which language you'll be using before to make your representation so those who wish to use the headphones may do so from the beginning. Please remain at the front following your representation in order that any questions of clarification can be asked.

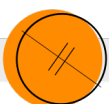
There's no fire alarms planned for today so if it sounds, it's real and we will need to make our way to the fire exits located in the stairwell directly outside this room. The muster point is at the Cardiff University carpark around the corner. Rest rooms are on the right-hand side of this floor. Leaflets, maps and other supporting material are available for you to access today. As mentioned earlier, simultaneous translation is available from English..., from, sorry, from Welsh to English should you wish to use that.

Today's proceedings are being livestreamed and recording is in place for transcription purposes. Please do not use your personal devices to take pictures of recordings of the proceedings and we'd also like to request that where possible, please keep your masks on, however remove them when you're speaking. If you do require masks, we have some available at the registration desk as well as hand sanitiser. If you are intending to Tweet, which we'll encourage you to do so, please tag us @BCommWales. And lastly, we'd be grateful if mobile phones could be placed on silent in order not to disrupt proceedings. Today the hearing will sit from 8am until 8pm. We'll take a lunchbreak between twelve and one and we may have short breaks throughout the day.

[00:05:12]

I'll use the last few minutes of the opening session to talk through the process the Commission has undertaken to date, as well as the Commission's proposals.

In developing our proposals, the Commission worked to take account of the statutory factors set up in legislation; such as special geographical considerations, local government boundaries and local ties, and the boundaries of existing constituencies. As you will know, the UK Parliament has by Act of Parliament determined that each constituency in the UK shall not have more than 105% and not less than 95% of the UK electoral quarter, which is 73,393 electors. The



consequence of this is that the number of constituencies in Wales will be reduced from 40 to 32 and each constituency, with the exception of Ynys Môn, must have between 69,724 electors and 77,062 electors.

Wales is wholly divided into communities. The communities and their wards are the building blocks of the electoral wards of Wales. In turn, the Commission uses the electoral wards as the primary building blocks for parliamentary constituencies. We have sought to avoid dividing electoral wards between constituencies as they are well defined and well understood units which are generally indicative of the areas that have a broad community of interest.

When the Commission launched its proposals in September, it was the start of the process and not the end. Publication of the initial proposals initiated the first consultation period which ran from eighth of September 2021 to third of November '21. We received 1,211 representations. These representations were published on the 17th of December '21.

We are encouraging people to consider the detailed proposals and the representations that have been published and let us know what they think, and importantly, whether they've got counter proposals which will meet the requirements of the legislation. This public hearing and the other public hearings that we're holding across Wales are fundamental to this process.

As I mentioned earlier, we received a large number of representations in the initial consultation period. A small number of these were representations that covered all of Wales and these were primarily from the political parties and a small number of individuals. The majority of the representations received were focused on specific areas and here are some of the highlights.

The proposed Caerfyrddin constituency was broadly supported by the representations received. However, there were objections relating to the transfer of the community of Llangynor into the proposed Llanelli constituency. Many of the respondents argued that the community of Llangynor should be included in a Caerfyrddin constituency.

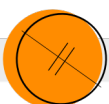
The proposed Cardiff West constituency received a number of representations in opposition, primarily due to the inclusion of Pont-y-Clun from Rhondda Cynon Taf. Respondents argued that Pont-y-clun should remain within a Pontypridd Rhondda Cynon Taf constituency.

There were a number of representations that oppose the proposed Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare and Pontypridd constituencies due to the division of the Cynon Valley. It was argued that the identity of the Cynon Valley should be preserved, and the area retained within a single constituency.

[00:08:06]

A number of representations opposed the proposed Cardiff South and Penarth constituency due to the inclusion of Dinas Powys from the Vale of Glamorgan and wanted Dinas Powys to remain in the Vale of Glamorgan constituency.

Objections to the proposed Swansea East and Neath constituency was mainly focussed on the combination of parts of Swansea with parts of Neath Port Talbot.



A number of representations also argued that the Pontardawe Upper Swansea Valley area should be included in a Swansea constituency, not in the proposed Brecon and Radnorshire constituency.

Several representations opposed the proposed Bridgend constituency proposal as it splits the Bridgend local authority area between two constituencies. Some argued that Porthcawl should not be joined with Aberafon Port Talbot and others oppose a division of the areas outside Bridgend town centre.

A significant number of representations oppose the proposals for Aberconwy and Dwyfor Meirionnydd.

The representations argued that Bangor, proposed to be in Aberconwy should be wholly included within an Arfon constituency.

The main objections to the proposed Wrexham constituency was due to the inclusion of Brymbo and Minera in a neighbouring constituency of Alyn and Deeside. Respondents argued that these communities should remain in Wrexham.

There was support for the proposed Ceredigion Preseli constituency, though some representations received stated that they would prefer a constituency that is wholly formed of the Pembrokeshire local authority.

The proposed Newport West and Caerphilly constituency received strong opposition to the combination of two separate local authority areas. Respondents argued that the Sirhywi Valley currently in Islwyn would be a better fit for Newport than Caerphilly proper.

Newport East was opposed by a small number of representations who requested Caldicot remain in Newport East, although there was broad support for the proposed Monmouthshire constituency.

A small number of representations opposed combining Blaenau Gwent and Rhymni into a single constituency due to issues of deprivation. No alternative was provided on this.

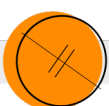
The main objections to, related to Delyn was due to its name. There was a preference for Clwyd East to be used instead.

Several representations disagreed with the proposed Clwyd constit..., Clwyd constituency. Arguments were varied, including how Llandrillo-Yn-Rhos should be included in Clwyd instead of instead of Llandrillo and Corwen, Rhuthun, Prestatyn and Dyserth.

[00:10:27]

Arguments against the proposed Alyn and Deeside and Delyn constituencies were mainly focused on the inclusion of Fflint and Bagillt within Delyn and it felt that they should be in the proposed Alyn and Deeside constituency.

Montgomery..., Montgomeryshire and Glyndŵr received broad support with a small number opposing the name.



That's all from me for today. Diolch for giving us your time today and I appreciate it's an early start, particularly for the political party, so.... However, we want to make sure that we had the opport... everyone had an opportunity to be present today and, you know, we're doing it from 8am 'til 8pm today, so I hope we'll be able to listen to everyone. I will get my colleague here to quickly sanitise this before I'll invite Geraint as the first speaker from Plaid Cymru.

Geraint, can I invite you to the front, please? Diolch.

GD: That should be okay. Can you all hear me? And thank you very much, Shereen. It's a pleasure to be here. I see the winds didn't stop the trains coming down this morning, so that was a bonus.

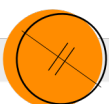
The, I'm going to start off on by not mentioning the fact that we disagree with the reduction in number of MPs for Wales, which is not the purpose of this committee at all, but we do want to place it on record and we have made this in our presentation which we submitted last year and also in the House of Commons. Having said that, we accept the limits on which the Commission have to work and the remit to which it's set.

So, moving on to our proposals proper. We didn't wait for your initial proposals to come out before we started looking at this. So, we started with a clean map as such and tried to come up with what we thought would be the best fit. We then subsequent.., that was in the summer of... well, early summer last year and then we revised our proposals following your initial proposals. So, this is... what's showing here, is almost a mix of those different stages that we went through. And so, some of it will look very similar to what the Boundary Commission has proposed in initial proposals, and some of which we agree with and makes a lot of sense, some of which we tweaked slightly, and some of which is quite dramatically different, especially in the north.

So, in terms of the southeast, and I'm gonna skip through here just to the map and if need be, I can come back. What we found when we were doing this, and especially when we looked at it after the initial proposals from yourselves, is that there is an issue that impacts on the south east that comes from Brecon and Radnor. Brecon and Radnor is not... hasn't got enough people in it, it's not big enough in order to be a constituency on its own, so it's got to take from somewhere else. Now, the response of the Boundary Commission has been to take Cwm Tawe from the Swansea area and put that in with Brecon and Radnor. So, it's taking a valleys area and putting it in with a rural, rural area of Powys.

[00:14:11]

What we propose is somewhat different to that. What we propose is that we... that the Commission should look at to taking from Monmouthshire and putting that in with Brecon and Radnorshire, simply that we think there is a greater similarity across a number of different areas between Abergavenny and Brecon, than there is with Cwm Tawe and Brecon. That's..., and I'll come on to the southwest and the area around Swansea later on, but that does impact of course then on the southeast and how that fits.



So, what we've suggested here is that the Monmouthshire constituency grows to include the remainder of Cwmbran. Currently, it includes a number of wards in Cwmbran, but includes the rest of Cwmbran into Monmouthshire.

The Newport East constituency stretches slightly further to the east and that the Newport West constituency does not go up to include parts of Caerphilly. I think that was an obvious, I mean, that was one of the strongest feedbacks we had internally as well as that Caerphilly should... you know, it makes no sense going in with Newport.

We think it's much more sensible to take the lower part of the Caerphilly County area, so the area around Risca and so on, and to include that [background noise]. Can I? Yeah, sure. [background noise] Is that okay? Do I need to start again? No? No? Okay. Sorry.

The, so in terms then of Newport West, it remains almost entirely within the boundaries of Newport County, with the exception of those few wards that look towards Newport anyway. That remains, leaves us able to keep Caerphilly constituency in the valleys area, and I'll cover that on the next slide, but that change in Newport we think is a better fit than what the Boundary Commission has proposed.

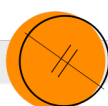
So, in central Glamorgan, and this comes on to cover the Caerphilly area, we propose keeping Caerphilly as a constituency on its, inside the valleys area. So, instead of reaching down to join up with Newport. To do that, it stretches a bit further north to includes areas in the Merthyr Council area, specifically around here known as Fiddler's Elbow, but around Treharris and the area further to the north of Treharris.

In terms of Merthyr and Aberdare, it's not been a constituency for a considerable time, of course, but it has some historic reference. It also shares a number of local services, the hospital and so on. We changed the wards slightly, simply that we have chan..., exchanged a few there because we've grown Caerphilly up to the bottom part of Merthyr. But as the general principle, we think this probably correct and it's hard to see another way around that. And I think back to the last abandoned review, which at one point took part of the Rhondda and put it with Aberdare, which was even, you know, worse fit. This is much better than that. So, we think that with our tweaks, obviously we prefer, but the general view of putting Merthyr with Aberdare makes a lot of sense.

[00:17:48]

Pontypridd. Likewise, we don't agree with putting Pontyclun in with Cardiff, but we do see there's an argument to put parts of Cardiff in with Pontypridd, and this is stretching down to Creigir and Pentyrch in that those wards are part of the historic, Taff Ely Borough Council that used to exist. There is a tradition of them looking both ways in effect, those areas not just being part of Cardiff as you would assume, where we are now. So, there is some scope there we believe to look that way, whereas Pontyclun, it's stretching it to say it's part of Cardiff, I think, in people's own minds.

With the Rhondda, the Rhondda stretching down the Ely Valley makes a lot of sense and we've..., you know, it's a slight change in what the Boundary Commission



propose but it's, you know, it's following the same lines coming down, and we agree with that.

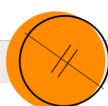
The..., in terms of the Bridgend area, it did seem strange to us to take a couple of wards out of the Bridgend town and place them in with the Vale of Glamorgan area. So, an alternative here is to go across the coast and to include Porthcawl area, so instead of going into splitting one urban area, you include a completely separate urban area in with that. That works - and this is where I come back up towards Cardiff, that works if you put Barry in with Penarth and the..., create a constituency that is look..., based across the River Severn there, includes the ports of Cardiff and of Barry, that Cardiff on its own of course struggles to make another extra constituency.

To western Glamorgan. There we go. Right, okay. Western Glamorgan and Cwm Tawe is the [no sound 0:20:00 – 0:20:15] main item I'd like to draw your attention to here. Putting Cwm Tawe in with Brecon and Radnor seems very strange in terms of identity, in terms of socioeconomic background and travelling distance where it looks to. It just seems an odd addition into it. It's not a rural market town, it's not..., it's a traditional Valleys area. So, it seems an odd addition into Brecon and Radnor. It doesn't quite feel correct, and I think that's why you've also had, you know, representations from the public around this. What we propose here, is a seat which we have called the, based on the Lliw Borough Council, so Lliw and Tawe seat, which covers the area from the north of Swansea West and stretching east up towards the top of Cwmnedd. So, it was former..., I mean, it's slightly larger than the former Lliw Borough Council, but it's more or less based on that geographical area. That council of course is one of the ones that was abolished in 1996, so it's not too far in the past.

The..., when we come to the Swansea area, this enables us to have a Swansea East and a Swansea West constituencies. I think that's... you know, Swansea is a very distinct area in terms of its identity, it makes sense to keep two constituencies within the Swansea council area. I'm putting the Neath and Port Talbot together. We... it's in the area which is covered by the same local authority, it's got an existing identity and we think that that's a better fit vis-à-vis once you make the changes for the Cwm Tawe.

Next one. So... Ceredigion and Preseli. We have a minor suggestion to do with Ceredigion and Preseli, and that's simply to do with the area around St. David's and the ward of Maenclochog. Maenclochog's part of the Preseli Hills and it looks north towards the remainder of Preseli rather than south towards the rest of Pembrokeshire. It's got a greater number of Welsh speakers, it's much more akin to the rest of Preseli and south Ceredigion than it is to South Pembrokeshire. Though the opposite is true of St. David's in that it tends to be more similar linguistically and culturally to the remainder of the south of Pembrokeshire, and transport links are good from St. David's either to the north or to the south. This feels like a better fit, it's a very, sort of, simple swap in effect for this area.

[00:23:27]



In terms of Carmarthenshire, we have proposed Carmarthen, Carmar, Carmarthen and Dinefwr as a name. The seat of Llanelli, we would suggest is a better fit going west up to the Pembrokeshire border and then creating a Carmarthen Dinefwr seat to the north of the Llanelli seat. So instead of Llanelli going..., reaching up further north, it stretches further west. There's good transport links, it seems to us to make more sense, it fits the numbers and so on.

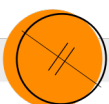
Okay, so Brecon and Radnor. So, Brecon and Radnor's a key to so much of what is going on to the south of it, and that was obvious from the Boundary Commission's initial proposals and from when we looked at it as well. It's the size and the number of people living in the area means it's either got to..., it's got to stretch somewhere. It's hard to stretch west because of the Cambrian Mountains in the way and going further north then impacts dramatically on the seats in Wrexham, knock on effect from into Maldwyn and Wrexham and so on. So, it makes more sense to come somewhere from the south. However, we do believe that putting Cwm Tawe in with Brecon and Radnor is culturally and economically not the best way forward. I think there is a lot greater similarity between the towns of Abergavenny and Brecon than with Cwm Tawe and Brecon. Both of Abergavenny and Brecon have very similar economic backgrounds, they're similar linguistically, they're similar culturally. It makes much more sense in that regard. I think that's why you had so many representations from the Cwm Tawe area about this in that they, it doesn't feel natural for those people to be put in with a predominantly rural agricultural based constituency.

The Montgomeryshire, Maldwyn, Maldwyn and Glyndŵr. The name, again I'm keeping the name of Maldwyn we find, think is important. Montgomeryshire is one of the oldest constituencies in the House of Commons, if not the oldest by now, 1542. It seems if we can keep the name in use, that is an important factor to people in the area. I have to declare my wife is from Montgomeryshire, so it's important not just for that reason. (laughs)

But one area we have changed on this is Dyffryn Dyfi, which is the area from Machynlleth to Glantwymyn, and that fits the other side of the watershed and the mountains there. And it tends to be more similar in terms of background and economics and travel to the area of south Meirionnydd than it is for the remainder of Maldwyn. So, we've not suggested, we are suggesting taking those, like, Dyffryn Dyfi, those three wards and putting it in with another constituency, which I'll touch on in a moment.

[00:27:06]

Right, flying through this. The northwest. This is the one area obviously from looking at the map alone, you can see where we are drawing our proposals with a blank map, before we saw the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission. We looked at this and said, well, you know, there's a large geographic area. How do we best fit the economic factors and the social factors into this area? It's an area which is in the Meirionnydd and Conwy Valley and Clwydian Hills. It's very, very much agricultural in background, quite sparsely populated. As you move towards the Menai all the way from Conwy down to Aberdaron, its economy changes somewhat. Agriculture is still a very important factor, but tourism starts to play a bigger impact in this. Despite the look on the map, the travel to, the travelling distances from the furthest point in our proposed Meirionnydd Nant Conwy and Denbigh constituency is less than what is in the proposed Meirionnydd Dwyfor



constituency by the Boundary Commission. Travelling distances from Aberdaron and to Aberdyfi were just under, well, two hours, and from Aberdyfi to Denbigh is an hour and 37 minutes. So, its transport links actually are not as bad as the transport links for the proposed Meirionnydd Dwyfor constituency.

The, second..., in fact, the constituency, the Menai constituency, we propose there is mostly based on two former Westminster constituencies, that of Caernarfon and Conwy. The old Caernarfon seat, of course, stretched from Caernarfon to Penllŷn and the Conwy seat was Bangor and Llandudno. So, what we've done here is we've taken the majority of, well all of the Caernarfon seat plus the majority of the coastal strip of the Conwy seat – the former Conwy seat – and put them together to form the proposed Menai constituency.

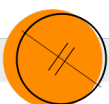
In terms of the Meirionnydd Nant Conwy and Denbigh constituency, there's a number of small rural market towns dotted around the area from Ruthin to Denbigh, Bala, Dolgellau. These are very similar in terms of their economic background and there are similar issues facing all of those towns.

Moving to the north coast. Again this is, refers back to where we started in the summer, or early summer last year, and we questioned why constituencies are running north south throughout North Wales. There's an argument for geography in that we've got the different valleys running down, but economically, transport-wise, there's not a great deal of support or reasoning behind that. There's greater similarity between the north Wales coastal towns than there is between their rural hinterlands. And in fact, by putting..., by splitting the rural North Wales up and placing it with the heavily populated urban areas around the coast, in effect you're disenfranchising a lot of the rural North Wales and the issues facing those constituencies, or those areas, are quite dramatically different. So, by putting in place the constituencies together which stretch east west, instead of north south, we come up with a different dynamic in those constituencies, meaning that the future Member of Parliament will be able to address issues much more directly and concentrate more on specific issues affecting those areas instead of trying to cover everything from rural Dyffryn Conwy through to Llandudno and Rhyl, Prestatyn and so on, and moving up into the con..., areas around Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd. So, it's a quite a dramatic, a different approach to the one the Boundary Commission's taken and that's why we proposed it.

I notice also there were a number of, and and I think Shereen referred to this before, forgive me if I'm wrong but I noticed it on some of the submissions - there was an argument against splitting Rhyl and Prestatyn as well. And this keeps Rhyl and Prestatyn together. And it keeps, you know, Colwyn Bay sits with Llandudno, and it makes much more sense in terms of the people that live there. Transport links are good throughout this area obviously with the A55 running through it but the larger constituency which we propose to the south also has the former A5 running through it. So again, transport links are pretty good there.

[00:32:05]

Northeast. It's similar to the Boundary Commission's proposals to a degree. We have just slightly different..., some slight differences on the wards but it's, we



believe, looking, after reading through some of the submissions from members of the public which addresses a number of those issues raised and allows the con... Wrexham to remain much more with its hinterland as such.

How am I doing for time?

Chair: You're good for time.

GD: Yeah? Okay. And that comes to the end of the presentation. Is there anything specifically that you'd like me to go back over other than [inaudible - 0:33:40].

Chair: Nigel? Steve? Anything in particular?

SP: Yes, sorry, one point. When it comes to Ceredigion Preseli, could you just remind me of which wards you wish to transfer both ways between [inaudible - 0:33:57] constituency and [inaudible - 0:33:59]?

Chair: Are you all right to get the presentation back on? Thank you.

GD: It's around the St. David's area, Solfach and Maenclochog. So, it's bringing Maenclochog in and taking...

SP: And it couldn't include Letterston?

GD: No.

SP: Okay.

GD: I'd have to check. I've got it on here. Second. Just get through it. There we go. Okay. So, what we've proposed there..., no, no, not Letterston, no.

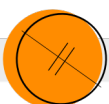
SP: Okay, that's fine.

GD: If you were to look at the map.

Unknown male: Just to pick up your thinking about the north coast and you're thinking of it in terms of a prism of west to east as opposed to north to south. So, sort of interesting. Can, can you just talk through that again but just showing through that detail of the [inaudible - 0:35:05]. Thank you.

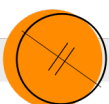
[00:35:06]

GD: By all means. I mean, it's one of the things that's very easy to do, is to be even unconsciously guided by what someone else has proposed. So when we looked at this, we looked at it prior to seeing the Boundary Commission's initial proposals. And then we reassessed and said, well, do we still, you know, do we think your proposals are better than what we've suggested here? But we think there's value in looking at this. The north coast, there we go, yeah. [Unknown male: To get a feel] Yeah, sure. The, so it stretches..., which one are we looking at here? That's Llandudno and Colwyn. So, Llandudno, instead of looking up the Conwy Valley, looks east towards Colwyn Bay and so on, Rhuddlan, St Asaph. The Delyn constituency and..., in terms of the naming, naming of these constituencies, I



noticed the comments around Delyn vis-à-vis Clwyd East. Delyn has some history to it. It seems to make sense, it works bilingually, it's always an advantage. We had no strong representation either way, but it would seem to make sense to us to use, to carry on with the use of the name. Delyn, but this takes Mold into the Delyn constituency, as opposed to the Boundary Commission's initial proposals which puts it in with, I can't remember which one it is now, but further, further, the constituency next over.

- Chair: Are there any questions of clarification from the...? Roger, would you like to...?
- RP: Yes, just, just on a couple of points that have been made, just to be absolutely clear, Letterston, Solva and St. David's moved constituency. So, Letterston is included in mid Pem..., mid and south Pembrokeshire rather than..., mid and south Pembrokeshire rather than Ceredigion Preseli. So Letterston does move under your proposal, but I just wanted to...
- GD: All right. Okay. Thank you, Roger.
- RP: Oh, sorry. It, it's Roger Pratt, Welsh Conservatives. And in terms of Mold, am I not correct in saying that Mold, under the Boundary Commission proposals, is in Delyn?
- GD: In which case, my apologies. I was doing that from memory, so...
- RP: I'm pretty sure, I'm right.
- Chair: I'll double check.
- RP: But my question of clarification, is that in the Boundary Commission initial proposals booklet, it says under the proposals, six principal councils would be wholly contained within new constituencies. I wonder if you can tell us how many principal councils would be wholly contained within new constituencies under the Plaid Cymru's alternative-
- Chair: For the purposes – sorry, Geraint – for the purposes of live streaming and those watching at home, we've had a question of clarification on how many, sorry, how many principal councils are wholly contained within constituencies under the Plaid Cymru proposals. Geraint, can I invite you to answer?
- GD: I would have to come back to you on that, I'm afraid. Off the top of my head, I, I can't answer, Roger.
- RP: I mean, they, they name the, the the six as Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion and the Isle of Anglesey which, of course, is Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire and Torfaen, am I right in saying that you split Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire and Torfaen, so the answer's two?
- [00:38:36]
- GD: I'd have to come back to you, Roger. Sorry, without looking it up, I'm afraid I don't know.



Chair: Fine. Thank you. Are there any more questions for clarification? Nope. Geraint, diolch, we've got, we'll save, you've emailed us a copy of your presentation, so we'll make sure we upload it with the slides at the end.

GD: I have, yeah. Okay, thank you.

Chair: Diolch. [pause] Did you drink your drink? Do you want to drink your drink? [laughter] Not that we're into recycling but, you know, if it's untouched then we can... [pause]

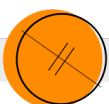
Our next speaker will be Joe Lock from Welsh Labour party who's happy to go on ahead of his time. So, you have, essentially, you have 45 minutes. My colleague, Tom Jenkins there, apologies Geraint, you were perfectly within time, so Tom didn't have to raise his red card in the back. The five-minute mark, if you've got five minutes left, Tom will raise a little sign there just so....

JL: I'll try and do as well as Geraint. Bore da, my name's Joe Lock. I am the Deputy General Secretary of Welsh Labour, and this submission is made on behalf of Welsh Labour and the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party. It is an overall response to the initial proposals of the parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales, which follows a consult..., a consultation process within the Labour Party involving all members of parliament, members of the Senedd and other elected public representatives and constituency labour parties.

I am happy, to some degree, to answer any questions at the conclusion of this presentation. However, I would say that I'm not qualified to comment on the detail of matters of local ties in all parts of Wales. I happen to live in North Wales myself [inaudible - 0:41:06], so I'm not familiar with everything. But this presentation will therefore refer in general terms to the interaction of the rules and the merits as the Labour Party sees them, of different proposals rather than offer particular quality of evidence in respect of those ties. We would instead rely on the knowledge of our public representatives, some of whom are representing this afternoon, and others in areas affected, who will be attending these hearings and making written representations.

[00:41:45]

Yeah, there we go. We note that this review is the first to be carried out under the terms of the Parliamentary Constituencies acts 2020, which fixes the size of the House of Commons at 650 and creates an additional protected constituency of Ynys Môn, which is where I live. But that criteria, but that the criteria which the Commission may take into account in choosing between different schemes remain unchanged. They being, special geographical circumstances, including size, shape and accessibility of the constituency; local government boundaries; the boundaries of existing constituencies; any local ties that would be broken by changes to the constituencies; and any inconveniences attendant upon those changes. Our detailed comments on these rules, as they affect Wales, are contained within our written sub..., our written representation from the initial consultation period, and we do have copies with us today if anybody wants to have a peruse through them. It is self-evident that the Commission may not be able to fully adhere to all of these



criteria or indeed, in some places, any of them in every part of Wales, while keeping the electorates of constituencies within the permissible range. We accept that in some areas that the destruction to existing constituencies is likely to be substantial, that it may be difficult to respect local authority boundaries, and that local ties may be broken. Where the Labour Party puts forward alternative proposals to those of the Commission, we do so on the basis that we believe them to be, on balance, more consistent with those statutory criteria.

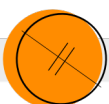
The Labour Party welcomes the initial proposal of the Commission, and the clear and comprehensive way in which they have set those proposals out. While we disagree with some of them and in some cases make alternative proposals which we believe better fit the statutory criteria, we accept that the Commission have fully considered the different options and explain the decisions which they have made. The Labour Party will engage constructively in the process, both in presenting our own preferred proposals and in commenting on those of others. We welcome the opportunity to present our views at this hearing and we look forward to hearing those of other participants. We will make detailed written representation at the conclusion of this consul... consultation period.

We note that the Commission's policy of using electoral wards as the smallest unit with which to build constituencies and of not dividing community council wards. The Labour Party supports the Commission in this respect and does not believe there is any benefit to be gained in any part of Wales from diverging from that policy. We believe that the use of wards as building blocks is an important means of making the process orderly and accessible, and while we may result, while it may result in some rigidity, limit the Commission's options, and inhibit their ability to resist community ties. Were they to be disregarded then the process of public engagement and consultation would become more complex and potentially opaque.

We do note that unlike the Boundary Commission for England, the Commission does not explicitly refer in their guidance booklet to the issue of so-called orphan wards. The arrangement whereby a single ward is included in a constituency while..., which is otherwise wholly comprised of wards from one or more other local authority, and that there are indeed some orphan wards within the initial proposal. We support a pragmatic approach in which each circumstance is treated on its own merit. In general, we note that very few local authorities in Wales can numerically sustain whole numbers of constituencies, and that some 15 of the 32 constituencies within the initial proposals are comprised of more than one local authority, compared with eight out of 40 currently. Therefore, it is highly likely that there will be constituencies where the requirements of minimum change and broad adherence to the local authority boundaries may best be met by orphan, orphan ward arrangements.

[00:46:17]

We note and support the Commission's policy on the names and designation of constituencies and its policy in proposing either English or Welsh names, as it believes is appropriate for the area concerned. We believe in general, that where a constituency is largely unchanged, aware, or is clearly a successor to an existing seat, the presumption should be that the name of the seat will remain the same.



However, we recognise that with major changes required to constituencies in many cases, new arrangements should be reflected in new constituency names.

We note that in drawing up their proposal, the Commission have a number of challenges where there may be no ideal solution. These include minimising the breaking of ties within constituencies in the south Wales Valleys where more than one of those valleys may be combined in one seat, or one valley may be divided between more than one seat.

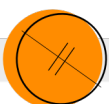
The bringing of electorates of constituencies in the city of Cardiff within 5% of the electoral quota, increasing the electorate of the Brecon and Radnorshire seat, increasing the electorate of the Ceredigion seat, increasing the electorate of the Montgomeryshire seat. These three constituencies are all sparsely populated with electorates well below the lower 5% threshold, and no large centres of population nearby which can easily be added to them. We believe therefore that the arrangements chosen to resolve these issues to a large extent dictate the pattern of constituencies across Wales as a whole. We broadly accept the initial proposals with, which the Commission have adopted in respect to these constituencies, although we do make minor, a minor counterproposal in respect of the successor seat to Ceredigion.

We note there are very few local authorities which can sustain, sustain whole numbers of constituencies within electorates within 5% of the electoral quota. We do support the proposed Torfaen seat and Monmouthshire seat, which are coterminous with their council areas. We also support the allocation of two whole seats in Carmarthenshire and do not wish to make any objection to the two constituencies as set out. We further support the retention of the local authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion and Merthyr Tydfil intact with their respective constituencies. While not affecting the overall pattern of constituencies and the grouping of local authorities, we also wish to make a counterproposal affecting the Neath Port Talbot County Borough and the City of Swansea. Otherwise, we do not wish to make any objections to the initial proposal of the Commission but will obviously consider proposals which are made by others and make comments upon them during the secondary consultation period.

We support or make no objection to the initial proposal for the 14 constituencies within the counties of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan. It is clearly logical that the county of Monmouthshire and the County Borough of Torfaen should each form a whole constituency, and we believe this will be widely supported. We believe that the inclusion of the eight wards of Caerphilly in the Upper Rhymney Valley is a logical way of increasing the electorate of Blaenau Gwent and, therefore support the proposed Blaenau Gwent and Rhymney seat.

[00:50:02]

We also note the major changes which are required within Newport and Caerphilly and specifically, the transfer of the six wards of the City of Newport from Newport West into the new Newport East. We support this proposal and commend the representation 9922 from Jessica Morden MP, which makes the arguments in favour of this seat. We accept, however, that the linkage between Newport and



Caerphilly is an awkward one and that there are only limited ties within the Newport West and Caerphilly seat as proposed. We do not however wish to object to the proposal which preserves the town of Caerphilly in one seat and retain Islwyn intact with the exception of one ward.

We also broadly support the Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare as proposed, noting that the inclusion of Nelson ward of Caerphilly County Council means the constituency is comprised of parts of three different local authorities. We also regret that this proposal results in the division of the Cynon Valley with Aberdare and Aberaman placed in different constituencies.

We note that the Commission has limited options within the City of Cardiff where the Cardiff South and Penarth seat is currently oversized, while the other three seats are all undersized with Cardiff Central being just 62,192 electors. The typically large electorates of wards in a city reduce the number of options available and mean that making the required adjustments within the city could result in a complete redrawing of the pattern of seats in Cardiff, which has largely been unchanged since 1983.

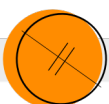
We, therefore, on balance, support the initial proposals which keep three of the four constituencies completely intact and entail just two wards within Cardiff moving constituency. We believe that the conclusion of Dinas Powys in the Cardiff south and Penarth is a logical extension to the current arrangements and that Dinas Powys itself looks towards Cardiff and has good transport connections.

We accept that the inclusion in the Taff's Well ward in Cardiff North and the Pontyclun in Cardiff West would mean that only one constituency would be wholly within Cardiff, and that the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough would be divided between five different constituencies. However, we believe that there are ties including road and rail connections between Taff Wells and North Cardiff, and between Pontyclun and West Cardiff, which make these proposals sensible. We therefore support the initial proposals for the Pontypridd and Rhondda seats. We also support the revised Vale of Glamorgan seat unchanged other than the transfer of Dinas Powys.

We note that there have been a number of objections and counterproposals to the initial proposals in this part of Wales. We will briefly comment on two of them here. In respect of Caerphilly, we note that the proposal supported by many representations that the Caerphilly should, would be retained and enlarged with wards from Islwyn, with the Newport West including Risca and Newbridge. While we understand the objections to the breakup of Caerphilly constituency, we..., however, we are not convinced that the ties between Newport and Islwyn are necessarily any stronger.

[00:53:38]

We also note a counterproposal from the Conservative Party 9809 supported by others which would place Nelson in the Islwyn seat, Cwmbach and Taff's Wells in Pontypridd with Aberaman and, in Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare. While this would leave Nelson in her constituency wholly within Caerphilly County Borough, Taff's Wells retained in its current seat, we believe that the proposal is deficient in



respect to Cardiff. In particular, by transferring Riverside to Cardiff Central and Llandaff North to Cardiff West, the proposal ends the use of the River Taf as the constituency boundary between Cardiff West and the other seats in the city. It also places the Llanrhymney and Rhymney wards in different constituencies, breaking the ties between them. We therefore do not support this counterproposal.

Onto mid and north Wales. We support the proposed Brecon and Radnor seat, and also the proposed Montgomery and Glyndŵr seat. We recognise again that the latter constituency would comprise a part of three local authorities, but the areas being added in all come from the existing Clwyd South and we believe are logical and compact and fit well with the Montgomeryshire constituency. We note then that the whole of the existing Wrexham seat can be retained with the with the addition of further 11 wards, which are currently in Clwyd South.

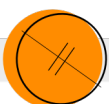
In the rest of North Wales, we recognise that there must be a net reduction of two seats, and that this will result in considerable change and constituencies which cover very large areas. We note that the Commission propose that the existing Alyn Deeside should be retained intact with the addition of two wards from Wrexham County Borough and three wards of Flintshire which are currently in Delyn, and we support that. We welcome the retention of the three main towns of Flint, Holywell and Mold within the Delyn seat, and we believe that the addition of Prestatyn is logical. We believe that the ties of Delyn to Ruthin and the four rural wards of Denbighshire, which are added to the seat, are weaker, but we do not wish to make a counterproposal.

We support the proposals for the three remaining seats in North Wales noting that the existing Aberconwy and Dwyfor Meirionnydd constituencies both remain intact within their larger, enlarged seats, and that the proposed Clwyd seat contains a large majority of the wards within the existing Clywd West seat. Again, we note that there have been a number of objections and counterproposals to constituencies in this area, which we will comment upon in more detail in our written representation.

We note that the counterproposal of the Conservative Party supported by others, which would enlarge Alyn Deeside with the town of Flint and Bagillt with Argoed, Leeswood, New Brighton retained in Delyn, to which would be added three additional rural wards of Denbighshire. Montgomeryshire and Glyndŵr would include more electors from Wrexham County Borough, and the Brymbo and Minera wards would be transferred to Wrexham. We do not support this proposal, which would remove Fflint which is one of the three main towns in the Delyn seat and replace it with the area centred in Corwen which has no ties with Flintshire or Prestatyn, while breaking its own ties with Llangollen. As stated, we believe that Brymbo, Minera, Argoed, Leeswood and New Brighton to be logical additions which would fit well within Alyn and Deeside.

[00:57:49]

We support the Commission's proposal for two seats wholly or partly in Bridgend County Borough, and particularly the transfer of the town of Porthcawl to Aberafon Porthcawl. We believe that there are ties between Margam, Cornelly and Pyle, which make this a logical place for constituency which contains parts of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot County Boroughs. We also support the proposed Bridgend seat



and we agree that, on balance, this is an appropriate name for a constituency given that Bridgend would be the largest settlement as well as being the name of the local authority.

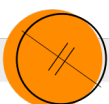
As noted above, we support the proposal of the Commission for the Brecon and Radnor seat to include 10 wards of the existing Neath, comprising of the Upper Taw Valley. Whilst we accept that this would break ties within the Neath constituency, we believe that any other alternative would lead to more disruption and that this area forms a natural extension to the existing constituency, respecting the ties between Ystalyfera and Ystradgynlais – excuse my Welsh, it's not, not great.

We recognise that the Bridgend County Borough wards of Cefn Glas and Llangewydd and Brynhyfryd have ties to the town of Bridgend, but we would argue that the same applies to Sarn and there is no available proposal which would contain the whole of the town and those areas which look to the town within a single constituency. We therefore do not support the counterproposal from the Conservative Party which would add part of Ogmore to Bridgend and link Aberafon to Maesteg. The latter Aberafon Maesteg constituency we believe would be effectively in two parts divided by a sparsely populated upland area and with minor roads linking them, one part looking to Port Talbot and the other to Bridgend.

We support the provision of three whole seats to the remainder of the Neath Port Talbot County Borough and the city of Swansea, but we believe that the initial proposals are unsatisfactory in creating a radial arrangement whereby two constituencies contain parts of central Swansea and extend a considerable distance beyond to communities, which they have very few ties. We believe that the need to reduce the number of seats in this part of Wales justifies the creation of a single constituency covering the whole of the Swansea City Centre. We therefore wish to propose that the Swansea Central and North seat should include the wards of Bon-y-maen, St. Thomas and Sketty with the wards of Llangyfelach Mawr, Penllergaer and Pontarddulais retained in the Swansea West and Gower seat. We then propose that the Morrison ward should be transferred to Swansea East and Neath, and we suggest that Swansea Central and North should be simply called Swansea Central. We, the counterproposal would result in the whole of Gower being kept intact with the exception of the Clydach ward, while the Swansea Central would include the majority of both Swansea East and Swansea West constituencies. And a map of our counterproposal on the ward list is shown here.

[01:01:48]

As stated above, we support the proposed Caerfyrddin seat and Llanelli seat. We do though wish to make a minor counterproposal in Pembrokeshire. This is for the wards of Solfa and St. David's to be included in the Mid and South Pembrokeshire seat and the Ceredigion Preseli seat to include Pembrokeshire County ward of Maenclochog. We believe that the proposal improves the shape of both constituencies with the Pembrokeshire part of Ceredigion Preseli more focused on Fishguard as its local centre, while respecting the ties of St. David's and Haverfordwest and the coastal communities to its south. A map of the counterproposal and wards are shown here.



That is the end, I think. So, finally, I just want to thank the Commission on behalf of the Labour Party. The Labour Party will be represented at all the public hearings, and we look forward to the contributions of the people of Wales in all parts of Wales. This presentation will form the basis of our written representation, which will also contain more comment upon other objections and proposals which had been made or may have been made. We trust that our constitution has been useful to you and we thank you again for allowing me to address the hearing. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Joe. I'll first check with my assistant commissioners if they've got any points of clarification before inviting members. Do you have any clarifications?

AM: Can I just pick up the southwest Gower slide again, just to sort of visualise it.

Chair: Apologies. Can we get the presentation back on, please?

JL: Sorry.

Chair: Thank you. Doctor Midah has asked for the slide on the Gower to be brought back up.

JL: Is that this one?

AM: Yeah, just to, just to...

JL: Let me just find it. Sorry.

Chair: Gower?

AM: Gower and Southwest.

Chair: Yeah. The Swansea counterproposals.

AM: Just before that. There we are. No, that's fine. Can I please have just two seconds to review? [pause] Okay. Thank you. Okay?

JL: Yeah.

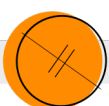
AM: You can provide copies of this as well?

JL: Yeah, yeah.

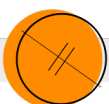
[01:04:23]

Chair: Yeah, we've got-... yeah. Stephen, have you...?

SP: Yes, one question. Could you elaborate a little on..., this is in relation to the transfer of, or the proposed transfer in the initial proposals, of the wards in the existing Neath constituency to Brecon and Radnor? Could you elaborate a little on why you think that that is a natural extension or less disruptive than the alternatives?



- JL: I'm not sure. I think we'll come back to you on that. I think..., I've I've got two of my technical officers with me who might be able to answer better than me if that, if that's permissible to the Commission?
- Chair: Are the other parties happy for - the political parties? Any objections? Can I invite the colleagues from Labour Party to respond, please?
- GC: My name is Greg Cook, I'm the former officer of the Labour Party who's assisting the party with this process. I think that's simply a reference to the fact that we believe there are ties with the Ystradgynlais area of similarities in the communities in that area. But clearly, I assume people from the area affected will be able to speak better on that than the MPs, obviously.
- Chair: Diolch.
- SP: Okay, thank you. Anything else from IACs? All right? I'm happy to open to the, those present.
- RP: Thank you very much. Roger Pratt from the Welsh Conservative Party. You made great play in your opening statement about the whole question of community councils, and you pointed out that the Commission haven't, ha, ha, haven't broken a community counsellor policy, with which you were very supportive. I wonder if you can say in your Swansea Neath Port Talbot counterproposal, whether or not there is a community council that is now split, which is not split under the Commission proposals?
- Chair: Or the, sorry, for the purposes...
- JL: Not that I'm aware...
- Chair: Sorry, Joe. Just for the purposes for the live streaming and for the record, Roger Pratt from the Conservatives have asked if any of the, I suppose, community areas have been split under the Labour Party?
- JL: Not that I'm aware, Roger, but I'll, I'll look into it further. My, my technical officers might know better.
- RP: You can, but I assume, the the MP's will, will know.
- GC: Yeah, the..., just for the record, I think you'll find that you split the Mumbles Community Council.
- [01:05:51]
- JL: Right, okay.
- GC: Between two constituencies.
- Chair: Thank you.



JL: I'm thinking, you know, in the interest of..., we're tied here and I think, you know, we do our best to make the best we can, and sometimes we're not going to be able to achieve perfection. And particularly with, with this process, it's never possible to do exactly what we want to do.

Unknown male: Sorry to jump in I think that the, the... [laughter]

Chair: Somebody's gonna get their steps in today. [laughs]

Unknown male: Sorry, to be pedantic, I think the reference in the statement was the non-division of commu..., of wards within community councils rather than to community councils itself, which I think is the policy of the Commission that it was referring to.

Chair: Yeah. We'll put policy is not to split communities in..., yes, whole communities as well as we try and keep, you know, not splitting electoral wards, and we've not done it for this particular set of initial proposals.

Are there any more questions of clarification for the Labour Party? If not, can I suggest we take a - we are very much ahead of schedule today [laughs] - well done to the political parties. Tom's not had to use his, you know, red card at the back there. Can I suggest we take a 10-minute comfort break and then we'll come back for the Liberal Democrats? And then followed by the Conservatives, unless people want to stick to their times, which is up to the presenters. I'll have a separate conversation.

Unknown male: I'm the Liberal Democrat....

Chair: Okay, so we'll take a 10-minute comfort break and then come back and continue. Is that okay?

Unknown male: Yeah.

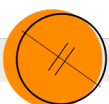
Chair: Diolch.

Okay. Welcome back, everyone. We'll have our next political party presentation from Councillor Pete Rogers from the Liberal Democrats. Pete? Over to you?

[01:08:44]

PR: Thank you very much. I'd like to first off thank the Commission and their staff for all the work that they have done to get to where we are today. I think all of us on the other side of the table would agree they have got an unenviable task to make the figures work and work in a way that we don't tear apart too much.

Today, I'm going to touch on a number of areas. I'm going to start looking at the overarching principles, both from the Commission and from our perspective. The areas of agreement, the areas of concern, picking up on the issues that have come up that we've seen during the consultation that we will try to address within our counterproposals.



I think first off, we're looking at the overarching principles, obviously we welcome the 650 members being retained compared to previously and whilst it has no bearing on today, like elsewhere, we want to put on record our concern about the lack of recognition of population sparsity and the failure to take the opportunity to move to a different voting system. But they're not for today, they're for another time.

So, where we are in agreement is the desire to draw the new boundaries based on historic constituencies where possible, attempt to retain the linguistic characteristics of constituencies and also the desire to minimise cross council constituencies and they, they have been the some of the underpinning approaches to the way we have attack, approached this within the Liberal Democrats.

Like Plaid Cymru, we started off before the Commission put their full proposals forward and we looked at a number of different models. We looked at a model that took Montgomeryshire West, we looked at models that took Brecon and Radnor South in many different ways, we looked at different approaches to Ceredigion. But at the end of the day, we settled on something that we think addresses a number of specific concerns that we then identified within the Commission's proposals.

The first one is a technical one, the lack of a contiguous constituency at high tide within the Cardiff area. The second is the crossing of the South Wales West – and it should be SWW not SSW and Mid Wales electorally, Senedd electoral regions. We recognise that these regional boundaries will be crossed. They're not an immediate factor, but we felt that this one in particular was one that deserves specific consideration.

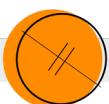
We had concerns about geographic distance but more also, we had concerns about the number of inside urban boundaries that have been introduced in this review compared to the existing boundaries of constituencies. We would point out this in particular in relation to Bridgend but also in relation to the Alyn and Deeside, Wrexham constituency.

And then finally, like others, we looked at the Caerphilly, Newport issue and we reached the conclusion that there was a better solution that not only enabled that issue to be resolved but actually, on subsequent examination of input from individuals, enabled us also to deal with issues around Aberdare and Aberaman and Nelson and its status as an orphan ward within Merthyr.

[01:12:42]

Where practical, we have opted to avoid orphan wards from one council being in another. It has not always been possible but wherever we could, we've looked to have a minimum of two wards from a council area within a ward.

In terms of the consultation, we were introduced to these right at the opening presentations. But in going through the over 1,000 consultation responses, we also picked out a number of themes and in most, if not all cases here, these are themes that have come through in responses from the public to the initial proposals, which our counterproposals, in no small part, address. And I'll refer back to this during our presentation as support for some of the ideas we put forward.



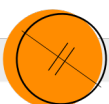
In looking at our counterproposals, we are dividing it into three areas. The first, I'll talk about the areas of agreement and secondly, there are two changes that we look at as self-contained, that even if you didn't accept anything else we put forward these are changes that are contained within one con..., two constituencies or a small cluster of constituencies. And then we look at the main counterproposals because as with all of these cases with the size of wards, a change in one place can ripple throughout the entirety of Wales.

So, if we look at the areas of agreement, we are completely supportive of the Commission in respect of Torfaen, Newport East, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent and Rhymney. When we look further across to the old Dyfed area, we are supportive at this stage of what the Commission has put forward, but we are mindful of a counterproposal from Ceredigion Council looking at linking wards across the river on the southern boundary around Lampeter and around Newcastle Emlyn, which we want to look at in more detail and would welcome more challenge on those because we can, whilst not adopting them, we can see the benefits of taking market towns along the border that are divided by obvious bridge networks that may actually offer a better fit and would address the challenge of the very long distance along the coast from St. David's up to Borth.

In terms of the self-contained changes, we identified two. The first one in the Bangor area is, comprises the addition of Pentir ward and then the consequent removal of Llangernyw and Uwchaled into the Clwyd constituency. Our view in this instance is very much the nature of Pentir is that whilst on paper, it looks to be a large rural ward, the vast majority of the population is around the hospital site, and it is actually an integral part of Bangor city itself. So, our conclusion on this is that if you are taking Bangor out of an Arfon type constituency and moving it back to a more traditional Conwy constituency of the 1980s and 90s, then it would make more sense to take this ward with it as an entirety so that there is no confusion over which MP actually represents you. This is supported, I just picked out two, by a significant number of responses from the public, and because it moves two wards from one and into another and fits with what we're looking at elsewhere, we think this could go through self-contained. So, this has the impact in the bottom southwest corner of what we are terming Clwyd West but the Commission termed Clwyd of adding two additional wards and consolidating the network in the southern half. This itself is supported by at least one submission from the public who identify the historic, cultural and linguistic links in that area.

[1:17:44]

In Swansea, we're looking much more towards the traditional Swansea West constituency. We're identifying significant intra-boundary links, particularly between Uplands and Sketty which had been supported elsewhere. So, our proposals look to very much along the lines of the Swansea West and Gower constituency that was proposed in the aborted review during the last parliamentary term. So, we will be taking Swansea from the Towy, including Castle, Townhill and Uplands in a ward that spans Swansea Bay right the way round to Mumbles.



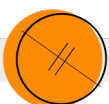
In the northern half, we will be looking to combine Cocketts with Cwmbwrla. In the previous reviews, this was accepted with Cockett and Cwmbwrla moving south. In this instance, the numbers are different because there is a significant increase in the student population which means the addition of voters from Cwmbwrla is not needed. We're also looking at the Upper Loughor, Lower Loughor, Kingsbridge Gorseinon wards which, in previous reviews have been split, but in this case, we have been retained together in accordance with, again, the outcomes of the review that was not implemented previously. These changes in Swansea are such, sustainable such that they do not impact on other changes elsewhere. Our reasoning on this is firstly linking Swansea Bay together and linking the university with the largely student pop in Sketty with the largely student population that has spilled over into the Uplands ward. We're also looking at community cohesion between Sketty and Uplands, and this is mainly religious, quite strong links in churches in that area but also, as identified by other submissions, within the Muslim community as well. And, again, I draw from outside with the comments from that particular section of the Swansea community.

When we look at our counterproposals - and this is now a wider review and we'll actually, rather than looking at a region, we'll move from constituency to constituency to explore the different impacts. We're looking at retaining all constituencies as being contiguous. It's a small matter, it's a technical matter but we believe it's possible to do it, so we don't see the reason of introducing an anomaly that can be avoided. We're looking at historic constituencies being retained as much as possible. We're looking at minimal crossings of Senedd regions, there are, there is one at present. We're looking at, in this instance, of having to because of the changes around Merthyr, which are included in the original proposals anyway. But we're also looking at MPs workloads with the increase in number of electors that they are looking after. One of the issues we identified was trying to minimise the number of different councils they and their staff have to interact with, particularly in respect of orphan wards. And then we've looked back and we've looked at the case and arguments that have been made in previous reviews and, where possible, we've tried to make sure that we haven't introduced matters that have been settled in discussion before, if they've not actually been implemented in reality.

The three main, the four main issues we identified, I spoke on briefly, is looking at Cardiff, Caerphilly, changes in Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend and in Brecon and Radnorshire.

[01:22:19]

The Cardiff example, the black line in the un, in the very clear coloured area is the boundary between two wards that make up the Cardiff South. This is all below the high tide mark and is an issue that we are addressing within our proposals. In this instance, this is supported by at least one submission, which summarises the position quite clearly, albeit not quite in the language I would have used. So, looking at Cardiff as a whole, Cardiff Central, as identified previously, is too small. We've looked at the linkage from Cathays to Gabalfa, which was identified in a previous review and accepted, and we're looking to add Heath in to make the numbers up. Heath is largely separated from this by the road and rail network. But within the top end, the High Road railway station serves both communities and



there are a number of road linkages between Heath and Cyncoed that reaches to conclude that this is an appropriate addition.

In respect of Cardiff south and Penarth, the reconstituting with Trowbridge Rhymney Splott resolves the issue we've identified and removes the need to take Dinas Powys out of the Vale of Glamorgan constituency and enables us to reinstate that retaining that constituency largely untouched, and breaking the need for that const..., the Cardiff South constituency to have a single orphan ward from another council area. This has been identified in a number of submissions, including from parliamentarians and local representatives.

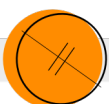
In the north, we've added Llanrumney in. The main problem, as identified elsewhere, is that Cardiff has very large multi-member wards, so breaking it down and rearranging things is quite a challenge. Our response is to add Pontprennau, Old St Mellon, Llanrumney in to create a Cardiff North constituency which is largely, but not wholly, looking towards the orig..., the current tradition.

The main challenge that we have in this instance though is Cardiff West. Here, there's been quite some contention around Pontyclun to clean being added into a Cardiff West constituency in the Commission's proposals. We addressed that in part by adding Llanharan, Llanharri and Brynnau, which all have a focal point in the area with the road network, and that extends the reach of this constituency so that it is much more clear that it is a South Pontypridd and Cardiff constituency so that Pontyclun area has links further west. We will do this, we're doing this for reasons of changes that we're looking at elsewhere within the valleys. And again, some comments.

[01:26:10]

In Caerphilly, we looked at a number of issues. We looked at the desire to remove the Nelson ward from Merthyr, to reduce the number of constituencies that overlap the Caerphilly Council area. But we also thought there was scope to improve the cohesion of the boundaries. So, in our model, we have looked not at a Caerphilly Newport constituency, we've looked at a Risca, Islwyn and Newport constituency. So, this this is our view of what a Neath, a Caerphilly constituency would look like, entirely within the Caerphilly Council area and drawing in Nelson so you no longer have the orphan ward in that, in the, in the Merthyr constituency. This has a number of support in varying different areas and has similarities to the counterproposal brought forward by Wayne David and other members of the local Labour Party, differing in that this includes the, if I go back, includes the Nelson ward and Argoed ward which were not in their proposal. There is one other slight difference that I can't remember but I'll draw that out in our written submissions.

In terms of Newport West, this draws in the remainder of the Caerphilly Council area that's not assigned elsewhere and basically links the Sirhowy Valley which runs through as being the main thread retaining community cohesion in that area. Again, some comments from elsewhere. This obviously has an impact and we now start to run this through the rest of the valleys. So, in removing Nelson, this enables the Aberaman North and Aberaman South to be added to Merthyr and Cynon which, as has already been identified, has broad community-based support. It also allows us now, by taking wards out of Pontypridd with this and other changes, to



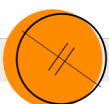
introduce Tonyrefail East and West back in, which means these are no longer linked in with the Rhondda constituency as they were. So, this maintains, whilst not in its entirety, maintains a lot more of the Pontypridd constituency as is and therefore reduces the number of members of the public that are visually and actually experiencing the change. These are, again, just the one comment as an example of what else is out there.

Our main difference though is looking at Bridgend and we'll touch on Bridgend itself, but in our altered plans, we're able to look both at the historic Vale of Ogmore and Rhondda, and actually create a constituency that looks at those two valleys so that you have a Rhondda and Ogmore constituency, which obviously draws on longstanding cultural similarities within the valleys but brings them together into a single coherent constituency. The main changes that we're looking at though are in the South Wales West rather than the South Wales East, or Central, and this is very much around Bridgend. We would look to Bridgend looking west rather than north and east and would retain the existing constituency largely intact. This is very much due to the changes in the boundaries which, although it doesn't come clearly on this slide, historically, had been around the outer edge of Bridgend but in the new proposals from the Commission, actually cut right through the heart of the western edge of the urban area. So, again, this is around cohesion and identity and making it easier for citizens to actually know their MP rather than having people on different sides of the street having a different MP. I recognise this isn't always possible, particularly in urban areas, but there is an opportunity here, so we believe it should be taken. This is supported by quite a number of comments from residents within the area citing the very disparate nature of a Bridgend and Porthcawl seat compared to the fact that they can walk to the centre of Bridgend, sorry, Aberafon and Porthcawl.

[01:31:45]

If we then look to Aberafon. Here, once you've lost Porthcawl, it needs to go somewhere and, in this instance, we've looked at the linkages between Bryn and Maesteg and Cymer and Maesteg, and reached the conclusion that the upper parts of the Valley into Maesteg, and there is a logical break below Maesteg, fit more neatly into a constituency here. And we draw in two of the eastern most wards from the Swansea Council area; St. Thomas, which now as well as the historic side of things, links across on Fabian way to the university area at Coedffranc, so we are seeing a logical linkage there. Further up the Towy, Bon-y-maen also has a logical br, natural break with the next community to the north. These are, again, some supporting comments.

Our main difference in dealing with Brecon and Radnorshire though is that we do not support the linkage of Pontardawe Ystalyfera with Brecon and Radnorshire. It doesn't have community support in that area with a number of town councils highlighting the desire to retain a historic Neath constituency. I've noticed one submission that points out that there is the linkage with pupils from the Sennybridge Craig area of Brecon travelling to Ystalyfera for education. It's worth pointing out that this is because there's no Welsh medium high school within the southern half of Brecon and Radnor, and these constituents are going down there for their education for that reason. They are, en route, passing a high school within Ystradgynlais and are even closer to Brecon. So we don't see any community



linkage that that would support. What we do see, though, is a number of opposition to this from local members, and although they come up with different solutions to the problem from Plaid Cymru and the Green Party.

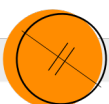
What we are looking at though are changes elsewhere. We believe by breaking the proposed link with the Neath Port Talbot area, not only are we breaking the link across a Senedd region, we are also enabling the opportunity to create a Brecon and Radnorshire constituency that remains wholly within one council area, and we are doing this by extending Brecon and Radnorshire up into the southern part of Montgomeryshire. This is in a slightly modified term very similar to the proposals at the last two reviews which the Commission came forward with, but which were never implemented, which stretched Brecon and Radnorshire up almost as far as Welshpool on one occasion. There are however very significant school linkages in this area. Llanidloes High School takes pupils from the Radnor and Nantmel wards of Brecon and Radnorshire, and Newtown High School is actually a high school on two sites with the main site in Newtown but also the second site in Presteigne. So, you would have a consolidation of those two school catchment areas more consolidated within the southern constituency, although obviously pupils coming in from the North would be in a different one. And again, similar comments.

If we are looking at moving parts of Montgomeryshire to the south, then they need to go to the north somewhere. We looked at an entire model whereby we looked west to include large parts of Meirionnydd and Dwyfor into this constituency but after consulting with members in the northern area, the feeling was that the linkages were much stronger if we consolidated the area around Wrexham, particularly Ponciau, Ecclesham, Johnstown, in that area where there are a number of wards that look to Ruabon and are almost part of Ruabon, and bringing them together so you have a cluster around Ruabon and the retained.

[01:37:10]

We then looked slightly further to the north, and our feeling was that Ruthin fit with Efenectyd and Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, and that placement within this constituency firms up the distinct identities of a southern Clwyd rural area with two significant towns of an industrial heritage and two significant towns of a more agricultural outlook. This, again, picks up on a number of issues, some directly and some indirectly, which draw on local links and strengthen local communities.

Having moved some areas out of the Wrexham constituency, this enables us to address the other interurban area problem that we've identified which has had a number of responses, and that's namely Minera and Brymbo being in the Alyn and Deeside constituency. This consolidates those two wards within Wrexham, it reduces the number of MPs that Wrexham will have to interact with as a council, and also removes two orphan wards from the Alyn and Deeside constituency that are in a different council area. So, it, it meets some of those proposals and those aims that we had as a party in the first instance. To give you, again, the example; this is the ward boundary that was proposed in the Commission proposals, again cutting through an urban area that we've now pulled into a boundary that is rural in its nature. This is received comment from the local county councillor and a number of members of the public.



This obviously has knock on effects and these are the revisions to the Alyn and Deeside constituency, and I did make one change here and I can't remember what it is. I apologise for that. If you allow me a moment, I will just check on my notes. Yeah, in this instance we looked at adding the Northop Hall ward from the proposed Delyn into this one. And I thought I had slides which are not present here which, again, is an example, it's in my main paper. [phone noise] Is that me?

Unknown male: Nah, it's coming from a bag over here.

PR: Oh, it is me. Take the bag outside. [laughs] It's all right, I brought so many devices with me, I'd forgotten to turn the alarm off on one of them. The, in this instance, the separation Northop Hall from Northup is a simple one in that we've looked at the alignments of the roads there, and it's broken by the main, by the main road running north in that area. So, it creates a logical boundary.

So, bringing everything back together, we have tried to reduce the number of constituencies that span council boundaries. We have managed to retain 17 constituencies falling within a single council area, 13 which span two councils and only two which extend across three. They are predominantly rural ones.

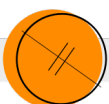
And then finally, just to look at the variation from the norm. We have by and large kept numbers very close to the electoral target that would highlight, in particular, Aberconwy, which is quite low, and we've done this because of the geography of the area. And also, the constituencies around Cardiff where the size of the wards make it very difficult to bring the numbers in as close to target as we would have liked. And that ends my presentation. And I won't press the last one in case you've got anything you want to ask me.

Chair: Can I check with my assistant commissioners if..., Steve, have you got a clarification?

[01:42:31]

SP: Yes, thank you. I got two, two points really. Could, could you, first could you expand a little bit more on the rationale for joining Ogmoreda to the Rhondda. And secondly, a more general point, you mentioned the issue of members of parliament interacting potentially with multiple councils, but to what extent do you think that is significant given the advent of devolution and the fact that that workload is potentially shared with Senedd members in some cases?

PR: Okay, in, in respect of Ogmoreda and Rhondda, the main rationale behind it, I'm afraid to say, is making the numbers work. When you take, when you look to create a boundary within Bridgend itself that doesn't split the urban area, when you're looking at moving Brecon and Radnorshire northwards in order to address the concerns in the Neath area, the key is to find a degree of cohesion and coherence. And one of the issues that was raised publicly early on when your proposals were released, was people saying this breaks up Ogmoreda, this does away with Ogmoreda as a historic identity. And we recognised that and felt that recognising the entity of the Ogmoreda Valley and linking it with the Rhondda with both mining traditions in both areas, represents a coherent response to the challenge of, the arithmetic challenge, of making the numbers work. So, it's a balance of pragmatism



but delivering pragmatism that has something that is identifiable in the real world, rather than just chopping a ward off here and there without thought for community.

SP: Okay.

PR: There was a second question. The...

SP: MPs workload...

PR: MPs and.... One of the key things is, to my mind, is ensuring that MP's staff, in particular, are able to build up strong relationships with the councils and Senedd members within the same area. If you can reduce the numbers of councils that an MP has to interact with, you're reducing the number of identical contacts that their staff are having to make. This is reduced compared to England where you've just got the, the one level of parliamentary representation. In Wales, you do have Senedd members as well who would also be operating with members of the public on issues relating to the Welsh Senedd. But my feeling is, again, it's practicalities in terms of developing relationships, but also for councils where they're having to produce documentation and pulling people together, reducing the number of MPs that they are working with, works as a benefit to their staff as well. So, it's, it's basically..., it's trying to reduce the number of interactions that are necessary to get a coherent meeting together almost.

SP: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Andrew? Andrew, have you got a... do you want to bring your microphone down slightly?

AC: Just remind me where Brecon and Radnor's southern boundary is. I didn't quite follow where, where that is.

[01:46:26]

PR: It's, the Brecon and Radnor southern boundary would be unchanged compared to what it is at present.

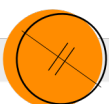
AC: So, you can retain the current constituency boundaries.

PR: The current constituency boundary, yeah.

Chair: Thank you.

AC: I was wondering, it's the same sort of question as the Ogmere question that you've just been asked, what's the rationale for putting St. Thomas and Bon-y-maen which are Swansea East District, if I can call them that, into Aberavon?

PR: There is an arithmetic element to it but there is also..., in my mind, there is a visual, if not actual, linkage as Swansea extends east into the Neath Port Talbot area along Fabian way. You've seen the development of the university along there, which falls actually within the, within Neath Port Talbot rather than Swansea. So, there, there



are connections there and also, you've got the obvious connection of the river as a natural dividing line that if you're moving the city centre wards, Uplands, if you're moving them west, that makes a logical divide and helps balance the arithmetic of bringing the wards in Neath into Neath; the wards that had been assigned to Brecon and Radnorshire. So, it's a combination of, again, some clear linkage along the seafront creating a coherent Swansea Bay east of the Towy with a pragmatic needing to balance the numbers to make everything work.

AM: No, I haven't got any questions, no.

Chair: Okay, I'm happy to open this up to the..., anyone. Members of the public? Nope? Great. Thank you.

PR: Thank you.

Chair: We'll just get the lectern sanitised and we'll have the next speaker, Roger Pratt, from the Conservative Party.

SP: Thank you.

Chair: Ah, thank you, Roger.

AM: Have you got a presentation as well?

RP: Yes. Yeah. And you, well, you've got it in front of you.

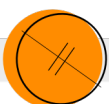
Unknown male: Oh, I know [inaudible - 1:49:39] see the screen.

Chair: Roger, it's 10 past 10, so, over to you.

[01:49:49]

RP: Okay. Bore da. Thank you very much indeed and my thanks to the Commission for all the work they've done on this. So, this presentation complements our submission, which is reference 9809 and, obviously, we support the allocation of 32 seats to Wales, one of which, of course, is now protected, Ynys Môn. So, the Commission, and indeed in our response, went alphabetically through the constituencies. On this occasion, and indeed when we respond later, we're going to do it by local authorities in groups because I think that's the easiest way to do it. So, you can see that we've got the Gwent group, then the Mid and South Glamorgan group. Now, under the Commission proposals, these two are actually combined but it's only because of the Nelson ward which we've heard about means that those two groups are combined, and we obviously will resolve that particular problem. So, the other ones are West Glamorgan and Brecon and Radnor, Dyfed and then North Wales and Montgomeryshire. So, we will look by local authority because I think that is the easiest way to do so, and I noticed a number of other people have, have done that.

So in all our deliberations, we looked and base what we do, and what a Commission does and what any counterproposals do, on the basis of the, the rules. Obviously, all the constituencies, apart from Ynys Môn have to be within the quota limit, but



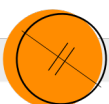
then you don't need to get as near the quota limit as,as possible. What you then need to do is to look at the other factors, and the Commission make it quite clear that that is what they do. So, we have looked at it in the basis of the rules, particularly the local government boundaries, existing constituencies, and local ties. I think those are the three that are, are most, most important.

So, if we look firstly at Gwent covering the five local authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Torfaen, we actually support five of those constituencies in their entirety. We don't support Islwyn, but we only don't support Islwyn in terms of adding one ward to Islwyn, that ward of Nelson from Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare. So, the inclusion of the Nelson ward in Islwyn ensures that Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney includes wards from two local authorities rather than three. It also ensures the county borough of Caerphilly is divided between three constituencies rather than four and linking Nelson back with four other Caerphilly wards that are currently in the same constituency restores local ties, particularly with, between Nelson and Ystrad Mynach. And if we look at those two, two factors, obviously, those come under Rule Five One B, and five-one D. So those are important points why we believe Nelson should be retained within that grouping.

[01:53:16]

There is significant support for the coterminous Monmouthshire and Torfaen constituencies, including both the members of parliament who represent those current constituencies which are altered. That's actually an improvement on the current situation for both those members of parliament and they both support it. And I think of the whole of Wales counterproposals, only the Greens and Plaid Cymru actually split. Monmouthshire, we notice that the Labour Party obviously support Monmouthshire as do the Liberal Democrats. And all four groups on Monmouthshire County Council, I think, Representation 9893 is particularly significant because it shows that all four political part..., all four groups, that's the Conservatives, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and the Independents, all support Monmouthshire. So, there's a unanimous support within Monmouthshire for this proposal and there's substantial support for keeping Blaenau Gwent whole and linking it with Rhymney; example, the Labour Member of Parliament, Nick Smith, and only two counterproposals actually split that local authority, a very small local authority. A number of counterproposals return Nelson to Islwyn rather than as an orphan ward. We talked about orphan wards. This is a classic orphan ward where it can be returned to an Islwyn constituency.

Now there is some support for the Commission's proposed Newport West and Caerphilly, but, constituency, but clearly there is considerable opposition and there is a particular counterproposal from the Labour Member of Parliament for Caerphilly, Wayne David, who creates a Newport West and Newbridge seat. We believe this is poorer in terms of links and is worse in terms of moved electors. We notice in Mr. David's submission that what he says is he complains about Caerphilly being split between four. He still splits it between three because he doesn't address the Nelson issue, and we think the worst part of splitting Caerphilly is actually the Nelson issue. So, his and ours are, are three. In fact, he's worse in terms of Islwyn and indeed Islwyn, in terms of that proposal, we would submit that Argoed and Penmaen have ties to Blackwood, which are serious ties that are broken in that



proposal, and note, obviously, the support of Chris Evans, the Labour Member of Parliament for Islwyn, together with the member of the Senedd for Islwyn and the Labour Party. It says in, in Chris Evans' letter that the Labour Party in Islwyn is unanimous in support of the Islwyn constituency. There is support for the Newport East constituency, which is totally within the Newport authority, including from the Member of Parliament, the Labour Member of Parliament, who says she accepts it with a heavy, heavy heart. But obviously, it is, she does show that there are links there all together within Newport instead of her having to represent, as she does currently, two different local authorities. So, we strongly support these areas.

So, let's move to Mid and South Glamorgan covering the four local authorities of Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Tâf, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. We support the Commission's proposals in their entirety. For the Rhondda, we didn't notice much objections to the Rhondda in the representations that we had. But we don't support the other seven seats, but we aren't making major changes in those seven seats. We're actually only involving the movement of 10 wards in, in total in this particular area.

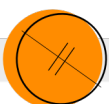
So, we cease 10 wards that are split. In terms of, in terms of Cardiff, there are not many representations from Cardiff compared with other areas of the country, but that is partly because there are a lot of representations from Pontyclun, Taffs Well and Dinas Powys, the three wards that currently are not linked with Cardiff which are linked with Cardiff, and that is where the objections are and it is impossible not to have one of those wards, but we do return two of the wards to their existing local authority, so we improve the position there.

[01:58:05]

So that is our, is our maps of what the Commission does and what we do. I apologise that I think on the Commission, I have put Llandaff and Llandaff North together which I apologise for [laughs]. Those, those two should be separated, which they're not. So, this is, these are the alternatives that we have in the, in the south of that part, and here are the alternatives we have in terms of the northern part, particularly the the Rhondda Cynon Taff part, and you'll see Nelson returning to Caerphilly and Aberaman moving into the, into Merthyr Tydfil and Aber, Aberdare. So, we reduce the number of seats in Caerphilly Borough from four to three, we reduce the number of seats in Rhondda Cynon Taff Borough from five to four, we reduce the number of council areas contained in Cardiff North from two to one, so there's another constituency totally within Cardiff. We've reduced the number of council areas contained in Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare from three to two. So that is all very compliant with Rule Five One B.

So, we restored Dinas Powys to Vale of Glamorgan, making it an unchanged constituency. It's the only constituency in Wales that has the right electorate and we believe it is correct, therefore, to make it an unchanged constituency in com..., in compliance with Rule Five One C. There are a lot, you'll notice also a lot of objections to the Dinas Powys linking with Cardiff and showing that there are ties to Barry and ties to Wernfawr.

So, under the Commission's proposal, there is no land link between Splott and Trowbridge in Cardiff South and Penarth. So, I think this is something, I think the



Liberal Democrats highlighted it in their presentation, and others have highlighted it as well. So in, in the guide, it's Paragraph 315, in the in the booklet, it's Paragraph 23, do not contain detached parts. So, an aim of the Commission is not to contain detached parts. We believe this is a, a, a detached part and that is why we've put it together. So if you look at Splott and Trowbridge on the map, you can see that there is no land link between Splott and Trowbridge, but by including Rumney you do two things; you ensure that there is that link between Splott and Trowbridge; and you have a constituency, which is the largest constituency in Wales, the only one above the quota, so what you do is you ensure that that constituency contains only wards from the existing constituency. So, it is much more compliant with Rule Five One C.

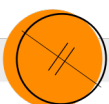
We unite Llandaff and Llandaff North. I appreciate that we are breaking the river link at this point, but Llandaff and Llandaff North clearly go together, and a number of counterproposals do suggest Llandaff and Llandaff North should go together. And we've added Riverside into Cardiff Central. Again, we accept that there's a river between it, but rivers do not necessarily..., rivers can unite as well as divide, and in this central area of Cardiff we think these go together. And we have, like the Liberal Democrats, put Llanrumney with Cardiff, with Cardiff North. And we know that the local government democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales suggests combining Llanrumney with the community of old St Mellons, so this will be good in the future though you can't take account of the wards that are coming into effect at the elections that are going to happen in May. It will mean that in future, these two areas are together. There's very strong support for adding Aberaman to Merthyr Tydfil, and we note those representations and we return the Taffs Well ward of Rhondda Cynon Taff to Pontypridd. We therefore have only one constituency crossing between Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taff, so we improve the links there.

[02:02:47]

So, some proposals propose a Rhondda and Ogmore seat. They're very limited. We would suggest there are very limited links between these two areas, and we believe that the Rhondda, as proposed by the Commission, is actually the best Rhondda you can get, and we support that. We don't note many representations arguing that Rhondda is not correct as a constituency.

So some, sorry, some constitu..., representations create a Barry and Penarth seat. Plaid Cymru do this but actually, in doing it, they split Penarth. So, Penarth is actually split in their proposals linking in the west of the Vale of Glamorgan with either Bridgend or Rhondda Cynon Taff. We believe this to be unnecessarily disruptive. We don't see a point in that. As we say, Vale of Glamorgan is the one constituency in Wales that is the right size. We don't make any change in the Commission, just delete Dinas Powys, but we think Dinas Powys can come back and we've shown a way of doing that.

So, if we move on to West Glamorgan and Powys. So, the local authorities of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend and the Powys..., the Brecon and Radnor part of Powys, we think it absolutely right that you take Powys and you look at it in the historic three counties; so Brecon and Radnor go south and Montgomery goes north. It actually, the numbers work better in that case, and we fully support the



Brecon and Radnor constituency and, as proposed, and I will come back to that in a bit.

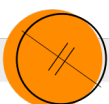
We support the Commission's composition of the these seats, but we disagree with the names of the seats. So, Swansea East and Neath, there are a lot of representations. I think, actually, more representations objecting to Neath linking with Swansea than there are with Neath linking with Brecon and Radnor. There are actually more on that, but we have sympathy with that, but we do believe Neath does have to link with Swansea in some way. But we believe that Neath should be recognised because Neath is the larger part of that constituency. Quite considerably, it's the larger part and we think, although it wouldn't completely assuage, people would be happier in Neath if it was called Neath and Swansea West rather than Swan..., Neath and, and.... It should, I'm sorry, that's a mistake, it should be Neath and Swansea East, not Neath and Swansea West.

And Gower. Similarly, Gower has the largest part, and I particularly note the support for the composition of the constituency but wanting a name change from the Gower Society, representation 9429. The Gower Society suggest that it should be..., they have different alternatives, but Gower should come first in the name. And we believe that Swansea Central and North, containing a fairly large rural area, should be a borough c..., county constituency rather than a borough constituency. We do not support the Aberafon, Porthcawl and Bridgend seats, but we will talk about the reorganisation of that.

[02:06:14]

So, the Commission proposals and our proposals don't affect any..., don't have any knock-on effects with any other constituencies. We just reorganise these two constituencies so that they are a Bridgend constituency and a Port Talbot and Abera..., a seat with Maesteg, whatever..., if it's called Port Talbot, fine, whatever. A, a, and Maesteg, whatever. But basically, reorganising those two. And the advantage of that, I think what I will do is actually go to that, as we've just had the..., and then going back to Brecon and Radnor. So, 18,259 electors. More electors are retained in their existing constituency 'cause we've put the whole of Bridgend back together again, so it's a Bridgend constituency plus. So, it's much more compliant with Rule Five One C in terms of an existing constituency, and we take Porthcawl. And we note, there are a very large number of representations. I think, in the south of Wales, clearly Bangor, Bangor has got more, but in the south of Wales, this actually has more representations than anywhere else. Some come from Port Talbot objecting, some come from Porthcawl objecting, a large number come from Bridgend objecting, and they show visibly how ties are broken by Bridgend being split under the Commission's proposals. So, we reunite it in in Bridgend and we note the comments also of Jamie, Jamie Wallace on that. So that's, that's Aberafon and Bridgend.

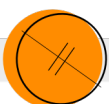
So, what I'd like to do is just go back then to Brecon and Radnor. So, all the counterproposals agree there should be a Brecon and Radnor seat but disagree where this seat should expand to. Some expand into Montgomeryshire and others into Monmouthshire. I think those are the two main alternatives that are, are put, although there is a counterproposal from the Neath Labour Party which is outside the scope. It suggests Brecon and Radnor should be kept alone and Neath should be 90,000, so, that, you clearly you can't take any notice of that. And Neath Port Talbot Council, although complaining and objecting, does not put in a, a



counterproposal. But there are some counterproposals, including from the Liberal Democrats and the Plaid Cymru. Plaid Cymru and the Greens expand into, into Monmouthshire, and the Liberal Democrats and others expand into Montgomeryshire. Now Montgomeryshire, I think, as a representative from Plaid said, is a historic county which has been a parliamentary seat for very many years, I'm not sure whether it is the oldest but when Craig Williams, I think will be coming to Aberystwyth, I will ask him to let you know whether it is the oldest constituency in the country. But it is a traditionally very historic county and we would object to breaking up Montgomeryshire. We note there are quite a few letters of support for Montgomeryshire being kept whole within the representations. But reference was made to the fact that that the Commission last time, in terms of Montgomeryshire, did propose that Montgomeryshire was split. The numbers were different, the number of seats were different, the circumstances were different. And there was an outcry from Montgomeryshire at that review, but the Commission, and I have to say ourselves as well, could not find an alternative solution. There is an alternative solution which the Commission have, have found. So, we do not think Montgomeryshire should be split. In terms of Monmouthshire, I have got a vested interest. I live in Abergavenny, although not. My postal address is Abergavenny, I actually live in Llanelly Hill, so Plaid would move me into Brecon and Radnor, my, the Greens would move me into Brecon and Radnor but divorce me from Abergavenny where our closest ties are. But Plaid split Monmouthshire into three and we do not think that is viable. That's a worse situation than the present time. Currently Monmouthshire, there is a lot of support for Monmouthshire, as we have shown, and we don't think it's right to break up a very sensible solution to link it in as a constituency coterminous with the council.

[02:11:16]

Now, we note that there is support for the Commission's proposal from Faye Jones, the Member of Parliament for Brecon and Radnor, who I think is speaking at the Swansea hearing, and from the Labour Party. I draw your attention to a counterproposal from Neath, we don't support all of that counterproposal, but that counterproposal comes from someone in Neath, 10... 170... 10070 – and that person shows the strong links between Ystradgynlais and Ystalyfera. There is a, a, a misnomer, there is a misnomer about Brecon and Radnor, which I can fully understand why people in the Ystalyfera, Pontardawe, part of Neath say they think they've been linked with Brecon. People say they have to go to Brecon for their Member of Parliament. But they won't. The largest town in the current Brecon and Radnorshire constituency is Ystradgynlais. That is the largest town in Brecon and Radnor at the moment. And Ystradgynlais, I don't think anyone doubts that Ystradgynlais has good links with Ystalyfera and with Pontardawe. In fact, if we show, there are close ties between Ystradgynlais, Ystalyfera and Pontardawe, they're connected along the A4067 and they're connected along the river Tawe. I think one of the problems here is the name of the constituency of Brecon and Radnor, and a number of people do say, well, we do think that the area should be recognised in the name. And bearing in mind the fact that with Ystradgynlais and Ystalyfera, at least a third of the constituency will actually be in that part and no Member of Parliament would ignore it and a Member of Parliament would have surgeries in that area and a Member of Parliament might well have an office in that area. So Ystalyfera, Pontardawe would not be, would not be side lined by that, and I think it would be worthwhile, and we'll talk more about this in Aberystwyth, but it, it would be worthwhile looking at a possible name change for Brecon and Radnor. I think, with those areas coming in, there is a misnomer about the nature



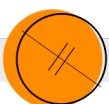
of the constituency, and I do think that you could have a name which might be..., Cwmtawe I think somebody has suggested or Upper Swansea Valley, or whatever, added to Brecon and Radnor. I do think there is a strong case for that, and we would certainly support that. The, the proposals in Montgomeryshire obviously divide Newtown and Montgomery, and break local ties and, obviously, I've talked about Monmouthshire extensively. So, we've dealt with that.

So, we note the proposals from the Labour Party to rearrange the seat, and other counterproposals, and we've had a counterproposal also from the Liberal Democrats. We do believe these proposals break ties. The Labour proposal splits the Mumbles Community Council and at previous reviews, there's been a lot of support for uniting Mumbles Community Council in one constituency, that's because the Mayals ward is part of the community council, the other wards, Oystermouth, etcetera, are currently within Gower. So, one of the strengths of the, of the Commission proposal is that actually they unite all the community council areas, one of which is Mumbles. They do also do one in southeast Wales. So, they unite Mumbles. We think that's a great support and that's why we don't support the Labour alternative, and there are clear links between Gorseinon and Loughor and the Gower, which would be broken under other proposals.

[02:15:12]

So, if we move to Dyfed covering Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, and Carmarthenshire, we support the seats of Ceredigion Preseli and Mid and South Pembrokeshire, and we note also that the Liberal Democrats support this proposal. We think it is the logical way of expanding the Ceredigion Preseli constituency. I know that others would have a slightly different configuration, including Maenclochog, but when Maenclochog was proposed previously to be in, in with Ceredigion, there were a, an awful lot of objections from Maenclochog, far more than there are, say, from St. David's and Solfa on this proposal, where there are actually very few complaints. The main complaint seems to come from Ceredigion who want Ceredigion to stay alone which, clearly, it can't. And we notice quite a lot of support for this proposal. So, we support those two proposals. We don't support the two other seats, but we would only make one minor change, although we will come back to this at Aberystwyth because there are other suggestions as well, but we support a minor change which would put the Llangynor ward from Llanelli into Caerfyrddin. You don't actually need to do anything else, that is right on the numbers, it makes both constituencies right. We think there is widespread support in the representations for that and you can see how close on that map that Llangynor is to Carmarthen although currently, it is in a different constituency but it's not in the Llanelli constituency, it's in in the Carmarthen East constituency. So, we do believe there is a overwhelming place for Llangynor to be included in Carmarthen and we will talk more in Aberystwyth as to whether we do, you do more than that. We would certainly strongly oppose Plaid, Plaid's suggestion of bringing into Llanelli some areas that are clearly linked to Carmarthen. So, we support the creation of two constituencies wholly in Carmarthenshire and two wholly in Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. Clearly, this is the best way to reflect Rule Five One B and it restored the position before 1997 when Dyfed last had four seats.

All four qualifying parties support the creating two constituencies, in Carmarthenshire and two constituencies for Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, although there are differences in terms of the makeup of the Ceredigion and North Pembrokeshire, or the Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire constituencies. All four

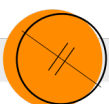


qualify. That's a very strong support, I would suggest, and I would therefore rule out any other counterproposals which in some way split Carmarthenshire or split Ceredig..., I don't think any split Ceredigion but actually split Carmarthenshire or split Pembrokeshire. We think the proposal is most compliant with the rules and we support it. So, the Llangynor ward has ties to those two wards, which are broken under the Commission's proposals and we restore them. It's also closely linked to Carmarthen and better fits into a constituency, including the town, includes a number of Carmarthen facilities laid out in many representations; the railway station, police station also serves Carmarthen. So, we, we support the Commission's proposals to divide Carmarthenshire between two seats and, similarly, support dividing Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire between two seats, and we oppose any other proposal which divides these three counties in a different way. Mention was made of the council, the Ceredigion Council representation, which actually means that you have a three local authority seat, and you also have an extra two local authority seat. So, we think it's much worse in terms of local government links, but we will say more in Aberystwyth about that.

[02:19:26]

So, if we move to North Wales, and here we're talking about the local authorities of Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Wrexham, Flintshire and, together with Montgomeryshire, I'm not going to talk about Ynys Môn because I think that this is, is clear. In these local authorities, you could not actually get the right numbers with just taking Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Wrexham and Flintshire because Ynys Môn is protected. You couldn't get, you couldn't get it right, so you do need to add Montgomeryshire into the mix and we strongly support that, strongly support Montgomeryshire being kept whole. We support the Commission's proposals for Aberconwy, Dwyfor Meirionnydd and, obviously, Ynys Môn. Now in terms of Aberconwy and Dwyfor Meirionnydd, we do accept that there are a lot of representations from Aberconwy and from Bangor. You wouldn't think from some of the representations that they'd actually been in a constituency together I think up until 2010, so not that far away, but we do accept that there are some real concerns about Bangor being split. And I think the, the Liberal Democrats have made an interesting proposal, although we certainly wouldn't agree with them about taking anything out of Aberconwy, we are going to look closely at whether the Pentir ward should be added to Aberconwy, and we'll say more about that in Aberystwyth. But if that ward was added to Aberconwy, Aberconwy and Dwyfor Meirionnydd would still be right in terms of, in terms of the numbers. But we will look further at that. But we, we do not support the Commission's proposals for Alyn and Deeside, Clwyd, Delyn, which..., and we renamed these Clwyd West and Clwyd East. I noticed the Liberal Democrats had Clwyd West as a seat. We think it's, it's more reflective of the, the area. Montgomeryshire and Glyndŵr we would rename Montgomeryshire and Clwyd South. And Wrexham, obviously, keep it as Wrexham.

So, that is our, our north Wales alternative, and you will notice one of the key factors there is that our Montgomeryshire and Glyndŵr seat, although we would rename it, is actually reduced in size. There are a lot of objections to, there are a lot of objections to that seat from the Wrexham side but they all say it's too large a seat. We do actually reduce it in size, so we think that is a benefit, and we do some alternatives, that's a more detailed look at the, at the area. So, we'd bring Fflint and Bagillt into Alyn and Deeside but still keeping Alyn and Deeside together, keeping Wrexham as it, as it is but adding back the Brymbo and Minera wards, in



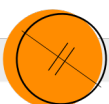
which there was a lot of, a lot of concern. So, the whole of current Alyn and Deeside is contained in the new constituency, we reduce the number of seats in Wrexham Borough from three to two, we reduce the number of council areas contained in Alyn and Deeside from two to one. So, again, improving Rule Five One B.

We respect the close ties. There are close ties between Argoed, Leeswood and New Brighton. We respect the ties these have with Mold within the proposed Delyn constituency. Our proposal respects the ties between Fflint, Bagillt and Connor's Quay. Our proposal restores the close links between Brymbo and Minera to other parts of Wrexham, we note very many representations on that, and we reflect the links between Pant, Johnstown and Rhos with Ruabon and Penycae, and we note what the Liberal Democrats said in a number of representations on that.

[02:23:24]

So, a number of proposals create a Montgomery and Meirionnydd seat, and the Greens in fact create a seat going from the English border right through The Llŷn Peninsula, quite incredible seat. But they all, any Montgomeryshire and Meirionnydd seat, basically is much larger than the proposed seat. And the big objection, any objection to the Montgomery seat was the size of it, and this would be even larger. So, I think there are more objections to, to this. Some combine Montgomery and Meirionnydd with either Snowdonia or southern Denbighshire and the Green, as it says, about the Green, Green proposal. So, these resulting seats would be by far the largest geographical seat, they would lack internal communication links and we don't think that that's right. Now some do it by actually creating Denbighshire as a unitary, as a local authority that is coterminous, and we have some sympathy with that because in an ideal world, it would be good that Denbighshire was on its own. But unfortunately, the knock-on effect of doing that with Denbighshire is that you have this very large constituency, and we think it'd be too large and too unwieldy, and that's why we support our slightly changed Montgomeryshire and, what we would call, South Clwyd. Some create a North Wales Coastal seat. These proposals ignore the ties between the coastal towns and their rural hinterlands in Conwy and Denbighshire, and we note that the Plaid Cymru proposal which has one seat with four local authorities made up a part of Gwynedd, part of Powys, part of Conwy and part of Denbighshire. We think that is not only very unwieldy, but it also is a four local authority seat. Nowhere in Wales have, the Commission have only suggested two, we suggest one, the three. Nowhere has any others suggested four local authorities, and they're very, very rare in England.

So just a reminder that all our judgement has been on the basis of these, these factors. We retain one Welsh constituency, Vale of Glamorgan, already compliant with Rule Two unchanged, we support all six councils wholly contained within new constituencies. Plaid, in fact, split four of them so they only support two councils wholly contained, and we considerably improve the position under Rule Five One B, three local authorities contain one less constituency and three constituencies include one less local authority. So that's much improved under Five One B. We move over 12,000 fewer electors than the Commission, so we're better under Rule Five One C, and we also restore a number of local ties. So between Nelson and Ystrad Mynach, Dinas Powys and Barry, Carmarthen, between Aberdare and Aberaman, between Brymbo and Minera and Coedpoeth, in Wrexham between



Mold and Mynydd Isa, there was a representation from Mynydd Isa objecting, and we, we restore that.

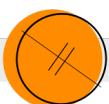
So, we will obviously appear in Aberystwyth, I think I'm on at eight o'clock in the morning in, in, in Aberystwyth, and we'll give you further views, particularly on the representations received, but also where we might look at slightly changing our position, possibly in terms of Aberconwy and Bangor, possibly in terms of Carmarthen. But we will look at those and talk to you further about that. Once again, thank you very much indeed to the Commission for all their work, and I'm very happy to take any questions there might be.

Chair: I'll first go to my assistant commissioners. Steve?

[02:27:25]

SP: Yes, thank you. And thank you for the presentation. Two comments or questions really. First one relates to something you mentioned towards the end there. If I understood correctly, you're not in favour of a sort of Montgomeryshire Meirionnydd combination, but you said that that was basically on the grounds of internal communication links. Could you perhaps explain why they're, they're worse than other parts of rural Wales where there's bound to be. I'm not making a prediction, but it looks likely that there's going to be a large rural constituency somewhere or more than one as a consequence of population sparsity. So that's the first point. Second point is in relation to Brecon and Radnor. I don't think there's any disputing the close links between Ystradgynlais and Ystalyfera, but most of the representations that I read from the Swansea Valley area were more concerned about the remoteness of those communities from places like Rhayadr, Builth, Llandrindod Wells and so on. Could you perhaps comment on that or expand on your thinking there?

RP: Yes, surely. Yeah, you're absolutely right. You do have to have some large constituencies, there's no doubt about that. Under the proposals, Brecon and Radnor is the largest proposed constituency in Wales, and that would still be, it currently is and it would still be continue to be the case. By adding the area the Commission have added, you actually add the smallest part, any other proposal is larger in area so it will be an even larger seat than, than, than currently. In terms of the links, we, we, a lot of people are, think it's called Brecon and Radnor and therefore, you know, I'm gonna have to go to Brecon for my Member of Parliament. Yes, it does include Rhayadr and Brecon and everywhere else, but the largest town in the constituency is Ystradgynlais. Ystradgynlais, I don't think anyone would doubt that there are strong links between Ystradgynlais and Ystalyfera. There are very strong links, they're all connected along the River Tawe, there are, there's no doubt about that. So I respect people's views, I just think that people don't understand, some people don't understand, that actually, Ystradgynlais is a part of it and any Member of Parliament would have surgeries in Pontardawe or.... The current Member of Parliament indeed does have surgeries at the moment in Ystradgynlais, and any Member of Parliament would have to have surgeries there. They may even have an office there. It'll roughly, that Ystradgynlais area, which as I say I think should be respected in the name, represents, I think, about a third of the constituency. So, it's an important part of the constituency. You've then got some large rural areas. That is inevitable.



In terms of Montgomeryshire, yes whatever you do with Montgomeryshire it's going to be large, and we think we have got the smallest area possible to link with it. And most of the complaints were about the size, and I think the communication links between, say, Montgomery and Porthmadog, just to take one example, and obviously it depends which areas you've got in, I won't go down the Llŷn Peninsula because it's such a ridiculous proposal [laughs]. I'm sure that that wouldn't come out. But say to Porthmadog, Meirionnydd and... the communication..., you would be hard pushed to get good communications from Montgomery to Porthmadog whereas Montgomery to south of Wrexham, to Ruabon, would be much easier to do. So, the, the links are much better in the proposed constituency, or the slightly changed constituency that we have, than they would be with the whole of Meirionnydd going right to, sort of, Porthmadog or wherever it was. Those links would be, would be worse whereas I think, actually, the links would not be too bad to places like Ruabon and Chirk and, certainly from Welshpool, or from Newtown or from Montgomery. Those links are pretty good up towards southern Wrexham.

SP: Thank you.

Chair: Anything else? Is there anyone seated up there who would like to ask a question of clarification? One sec, could you just wait for the microphone?

[02:31:52]

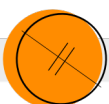
T: Hi, I've just got a quick question about...

Chair: Sorry, can you introduce yourself as name and affiliation if you have any?

T: Hi, my name's Tristan. I work in, in Caerphilly for the Member of Parliament. I wanted to clarify, obviously you're in support of the counter-... the proposal to merge Caerphilly with Newport West. You stated that, you know, the counterproposals offered by, for example, the Welsh Liberal Democrats or by Wayne David, MP for Caerphilly, there are poorer links in their counterproposals, which maintain the integrity of the Rhymney Valley, the communities, the culture. What are the stronger links that you suggest between Caerphilly and Newport? Because you said there are poorer links in the counterproposals, but you just didn't mention the, what the stronger links were. Thank you.

Chair: For the purposes of the live stream, the point of clarification is for Roger to expand on the links between Newp..., the stronger links between Newport West and Caerphilly.

RP: I accepted it's not easy. I just think the links between Newport West and Caerphilly are better than the links between, for example, Argoed or Pen-y-Maen and Newport. And they're strongly linked to Blackwood, which are broken under the proposals, and that's what I was objecting to. In terms of the links between Newport West and Caerphilly, it is very easy to drive up, I think it's A4067 but excuse me if I've got that wrong, but basically, if you go from Caerphilly through the Bedwas Trethomas Ward, you go right in, you go straight into, into Newport West, along that road. It's a main A road, it's a good link. I've used it on a number of occasions. My wife happened to be the Conservative candidate in Caerphilly on three occasions and I've driven that, that road a number of times into Newport, it's

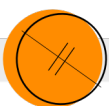


a very good road, it's, it's fine. So, there are very good links between Newport West and, and Caerphilly. It's always not ideal when you're combining two councils. You've got to combine two councils somewhere; I just happen to think Newport West and Caerphilly is better than Newport West going right up to Argoed.

Chair: Are there any more points for clarification. Diolch, Roger. Thank you.

I'm conscious we had dedicated the morning session for the qualifying political parties, and we are ahead of time. Is there anyone here who would like to take up a 10-minute slot to contribute to the public hearings? Alternatively, with the agreement of political parties, I suggest we end this morning's session currently and we will resume after lunch at 1pm. The ACs and the secretariat staff will be around, so if there's anything that you need or somebody, a memb..., you know, if you know someone who's turned up to provide a contribution, please just let us know and we can resume the session. So, if there's no other issues, we will meet you again at 1pm, say, in the room again. Diolch.

[End of Transcription 02:35:15]



Cardiff PM

Key

David:	David	RJ:	Ruth Jones
Chair:	Chair	JS:	Jo Stevens
SP:	Steven Phillips	AC:	Andrew Clemes
CE:	Chris Elmore	PR:	Pete Roberts
SB:	Siân Boyles	CEv:	Christopher Evans
RP:	Roger Pratt	NTS:	Nick Thomas-Symonds
AR:	Andrew Rice	JC:	John Child
THJ:	Thomas Henry-Jones	SM:	Steven Mayfield
KH:	Katherine Hughes	JudithC:	Judith Child
JC:	Jeff Cuthbert	CEv:	Clive Evans
LW:	Lindsay Whittle	DD:	David Davies
ARTD:	Andrew RT Davis	JM:	Jessica Morden
VD:	Vincent Driscoll	AM:	Anna McMorran
GC:	George Carrol		

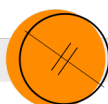
[Transcript starts at 00:00:00]

David: ... I come back to my earlier statement that I do believe there is a counter set of proposal which totally maintain the integrity of the electoral quota, but far more meaningfully address the other considerations relevant to the, the Commission's remit. And these are the proposals that was submitted by Wayne David MP. This would see the current Islwyn wards of Risca East, Risca West, Crosskeys, Ynysddu, Abercarn, Newbridge and Crymlin attached to the Newport West. The current Caerphilly wards of St James, Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen, Morgan Jones, St Martins, Penyrheol, Aber Valley, Llanbradach, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed and St Cattwg would be joined by the current Islwyn wards of Maesycymer, Pengam, Cefn Fforest, Blackwood and Pontllanfraith.

I had intended in my presentation just to focus on my written submission, but I do think it worth making one observation on the joint letter that the Commission's had submitted from Chris Evans MP for Islwyn and Rhianon Passmore, member of the Senedd for Islwyn. This letter identifies links between Hengoed, Ystrad Mynach and Llanbradach and through the viaduct joining Maesycymer and Hengoed. It also refers to the fact that St Cattwg ward borders the Pengam ward. And thirdly, it refers to the new ward using the shopping facilities of Blackwood. These are cited as being strong reasons for retaining the Commission's proposals unamended.

[00:01:23]

It has been suggested in some submissions, there are good road links between the communities to be linked with Newport under the Commission's initial proposals. Good is a somewhat subjective term and there can be varying degrees of good. What I believe is indisputable that if you look at the communities in the Caerphilly basin, in most instances the roads linked with Cardiff are what might be termed more good, ie, better than those with Newport. There are wards currently in Islwyn where the road links are much better with Newport, eg, Risca East, Risca West, Crosskeys, Ynysddu, Abercarn, Newbridge and Crymlin. Indeed, to travel by car



from a number of the wards in the Caerphilly basin to Newport, you might find yourself driving through those very wards in Islwyn I've just listed.

So I did just want to come back to one point in, in terms of the, the issue about the, the letter from Chris Evans MP and Rhianon Passmore MS, where they say that actually, there are strong reasons for retaining the Commission's initial proposals based on those links. Well, just to point out that the counterproposal submitted by Wayne David MP actually maintain those very links that's referred to in the letter from Chris Evans MP and Rhianon Passmore MS. Therefore, inclusion, in conclusion, the counterproposal submitted by Wayne David MP would, in my view, preserve the, many of the historical links between wards in the Caerphilly basin and surrounding area, and there are more natural geographical links with Cardiff, whilst aligning with Newport a number of wards in the, in Islwyn who have much closer geographical and transport links with Newport.

I would respectfully ask the Commission to relook at its proposals in light of the significant number of representations it has, it's received expressing concerns over joining wards in the Caerphilly area with Newport West, and recognise the more logical alternative set out to the proposals from Wayne David MP.

And finally, just a reminder to the Commission, which I'm sure it's aware of, that the counterproposal submitted by Wayne David MP, unlike most, if not all the other submissions that have been made across Wales with counterproposals, the submission from Wayne David MP maintains the integrity of the electoral quota.

So thank you again for the opportunity addressing you today, this afternoon and you have my best wishes for your ongoing deliberations. Thanks very much.

Chair: David, can I ask you just to wait for a second so we can check if anyone's got any clarifying questions. Any questions for clarification, Steve?

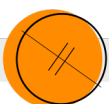
SP: Thank you. And thank you for the presentation. Just, just one question by way of clarification really, would it be fair to say that your overarching priority, as you put it, is the links with, between Caerphilly and Cardiff and the cohesion of the wards in the Caerphilly basin as opposed to where the division between constituencies might be drawn, might be drawn in Caerphilly?

David: I think, I think that's a fair comment, yes. I mean, the Caerphilly basin, when saying the Caerphilly basin I also include perhaps extending beyond what's traditionally considered the Caerphilly basin into Ystrad Mynach and Hengoed. I think sometimes it's deemed to sort of end at Llanbradach, but yes.

SP: 'Cause we've had discussions this morning about the Nelson ward, for example, and then of various potential permutations dividing Islwyn from Caerphilly.

[00:04:52]

David: I, I mean, if, if the Commission weren't operating within the very severe constraints that I referred to, then I'm sure my presentation today might have been. But, but obviously, you know, at the end of the day, realistically, for your put forward proposals that you are able to consider, then the constraints of the electoral quota



had to be met and taking into account issues around Nelson or Bargoed clearly would have made that impossible.

SP: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Are there any questions or clarification? Hugh, can you pass on the mic?

RP: Thank you very much. Roger Pratt from the Conservative Party. You mentioned the wards that were being proposed to be included with Newport or Newport West wards under Mr David's proposal rather than the Commission's proposals. You didn't mention the two wards of Argoed and Penmaen. Am I right in saying those two wards also would be linked to Newport West under the counterproposal?

David: That's not part of the counterproposal, no. If you look at the counterproposal, that's not part of it.

RP: So can I ask where the wards of Penmaen and Argoed would go in this, under this proposal?

David: From my recollection, they wouldn't be affected by any of the changes we're proposing.

RP: So where would where would they be linked to?

David: I'm..., without going back at the report, I would, I would have to sort of check where they're currently allocated, but....

SW: Thank you

David: Okay.

Chair: Do we have any more questions for clarification? No? Okay. Thank you, David.

David: Thanks very much.

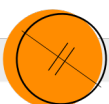
Chair: We'll just get the lectern sanitised before we call on the next speaker. Call Rhydian for a minute, ask if anyone else is... [Inaudible 00:06:43]

Is Clayton Jones here? Yeah? Nope? Okay. Can I invite Chris Elmore MP to address us? Thank you. Chris, you missed the earlier session. So you have 10 minutes. At the eight-minute mark, Tom will give you the signal and you'll have two minutes to wrap up. If you don't, I'll have to interrupt you [laughter] and let you do....

CE: That's absolutely fine, I'm hoping that it won't take more than ten minutes.

[00:07:40]

Chair: If you can just introduce yourself. Obviously, you're speaking in your capacity as an, you know, an elected member. And we will, if you remain after your presentation so we can ask any clarifying questions.



CE: Yeah.

Chair: Thank you.

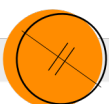
CE: I'm Chris Elmore, I'm a Member of Parliament for the current Ogmore constituency. I'm speaking as a Member of Parliament. The Boundary Commission's job is a difficult one given the strictness of the Act, and the Commission is tied by the remit that has been set, including being unable to avoid constituencies that sit across more than one local authority boundary. The challenge of topography and geography of Wales adds complexity to the Commission's recommendations. It is welcomed that in all recent reviews, the Commission have acknowledged that is no longer advisable to cut valley communities horizontally, now acknowledging where practical that boundaries within valley areas are vertical or follow the natural topography of the valley. This avoids splitting communities.

The Commission's proposals in relation to the existing Ogmore constituency and Bridgend constituencies are welcome. The name change to Bridgend simply acknowledges the town's size which, again, is to be welcomed. The proposal recognises longstanding local ties between the two constituencies and ensures the new constituency covers one county area with good transport connectivity, as well as strong economic, cultural and historical ties. Local government creating the suggested constituency and shows large parts of the Bridgend County Borough – BCBC - area remains within one constituency, which is welcome. This is due to the fact that residents living in the Llynfi, Garw, Ogmore valleys along with the community of Evanstown in the Gilfach Valley as well as the valley gateway areas around Sarn, Abercenyfig and the town of Pencoed access local authority services from BCBC. So the suggested new boundary, helpfully moving much of Bridgend town along with the communities that border the current Ogmore constituency such as Pen-y-fai, Coity and Brackla into one constituency makes sense.

Keeping communities of the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore valleys together acknowledges the long term historical connections between the communities through heavy industry such as mining for coal or iron. This can equally apply to the communities around Sarn and Pan, Pencoed, who firstly worked in pits locally and became larger settlements due to the expansion of industry in the three valleys, so are interconnected due to their shared history. Bridgend town, which used to form part of the original Ogmore constituency pre-1983 traces much of its history via the three valleys, so restoring them under one constituency is a logical proposal.

[00:09:56]

The communities in the existing Ogmore constituency, which are suggested for the new Bridgend constituency look to Bridgend town centre as a shopping district, including for banking services. The areas of the Garw and Ogmore valleys along with the communities within the valley gateways, such as Sarn, Abercenyfig and Pencoed experience, in part, high levels of deprivation and essential services such as Jobcentre Plus, are located for all these communities in Bridgend town. The Commission's suggested proposal links formally for residents in the area their longstanding view that the Bridgend town is their hub for socio-economic services.



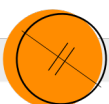
The wards across the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore valleys along with the valley gateway and Pencoed wards have longstanding and well-established transport services to Bridgend. The main bus station is linked for each community in Bridgend and the smaller bus station in Maesteg, again, has direct connectivity with the Bridgend bus station. All residents in the existing Ogmore constituency use Bridgend train station for mainline services, reinforcing the longstanding connection between the two constituencies. In the case of the Garw and Ogmore valleys, bus services use the Bridged station as a hub for onward travel with very limited services directly to other destinations.

Health provision, including A and E for existing BCBC communities of the Ogmore constituency, are in Bridgend. This includes the main hospital provision and the wider community health services such as maternity and postnatal services. The Commission's proposal would logically cement long established ties in terms of sporting, cultural and community connections.

Having considered the responses to the initial proposal for the Bridgend and the new neighbouring seat of Aberafan Porthcawl, I'm aware of regarding a small number of wards which form part of the town of Bridgend joining Aberafan and Porthcawl and not the new Bridgend constituency. It is concerning that the alternative proposal put forward by the Conservative Party would include the Llynfi Valley, Garw and Ogmore valleys, as well as breaking up the ward to the gateway area, ie, Abercenyfig being split from the wards of Sarn and Ynysawdre and added to the 13 wards from the existing Aberafan constituency. This would create a split community with difficult to non-existent transport links and would ultimately, does not acknowledge the distance of travel for residents when wishing to receive support from their Member of Parliament. By removing the ward of Aberkenfig, you are splitting the communities of Aberkenfig, Tondu Coytrahen from Sarn, Ynysawdre and Bryncethin and the surrounding villages. These communities share both educational, primary and secondary, and health services. They share recreational services including a sports centre, cricket ground and local playing facilities.

[00:12:26]

The area is a long and well-established community. Removing the ward would create a further anomaly in the boundaries of the suggested proposal in that the removal of the Aberkenfig ward would mean the community of Coytrahen is isolated. As an example, if the counterproposal was to move forward, residents living in Coytrahen would travel through the new Aberafan constituency twice in order to reach the suggested Bridgend constituency, as the neighbouring wards of Ynysawdre and Sarn would, would be re..., in the new constituency of Aberafan Maesteg, It should further be noted that this would mean the communities further up the Llynfi Valley, being Llangynwyd, Maesteg and Caerau would not be connected via the main road network in terms of boundaries to the suggested counterproposal. That includes the Garw and Ogmore valleys along with the community of Evanstown in the Gilfach Valley, relying instead on single track roads often only used for agriculture and access to remote farms, or driving down the Afan Valley and then back across the M4 or up the Afan Valley to gain access to the Ogmore Valley and then the Garw Valley in order not to leave the suggested



constituency. It cannot be compatible with the Commission's ambitions to have whole communities disconnected as is suggested in the counterproposal.

Although there are services that run between the communities in and around Maesteg down the Afan Valley, there are little to no service between the Garw and Ogmore valleys, as well as the community of Evanstown. As an example, to get a bus from the Garw valley to Port Talbot is one hour 40 minutes, which includes a change in Bridgend. Residents would find it perplexing as to why their parliamentary constituency links to Aberafan despite having little to no physical or historical connection to the area. Travel time across the suggested counterproposal given the lack of physical road networks connecting the Garw Valley with either the Llynfi, Ogmore, Afan and any other areas around Port Talbot would make travel up to an hour in most cases, which seems illogical when considering the Commission's objection, objection to, of keeping community ties where possible.

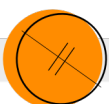
Much has been said about the accessibility of politicians before and since the pandemic. It is important that any suggested counterproposal brings together areas with logical connection. If the counterproposal was supported by the Commission, engaging with two distinct communities without connection could prove challenging, especially for further to reach communities like those in the Garw and Ogmore valleys, which have mountain ranges dividing them from the areas in and around Port Talbot and is accessed via Bridgend, which would be in a different constituency.

The counterproposal put forward by the Liberal Democrats suggest the breakup of communities with well-established ties including northern valley communities that share, for example, health and education provision. I set out a series of concerns regarding these proposals below.

Firstly the Aberafan with Maesteg and southeast Wales counterproposal ignores the established community of Llangynwyd as part of the Llynfi Valley community. Llangynwyd shares educational, health and cultural links and services with Maesteg. To break these communities up, given how interconnected their boundaries are, would mean a valley split in two, which would go against the principles of the Commission to not divide communities where it can be avoided. Equally, spanning a constituency over three county borough areas does not follow the Commission's ambition to keep constituency boundaries to a minimum number of council areas and could potentially have communities like Maesteg isolated when considering the challenges of representing a constituency that includes a city.

[00:15:37]

The suggested counterproposal of Bridgend does not acknowledge the long established links of the community of Bettws with the Garw Valley, including the ward forming part of the Garw Valley Community Council. To split community boundaries like this is unhelpful as it fails to acknowledge the historical ties the communities of Blaengarw, Pontycymer, Llangeinor have with Bettws. It further ignores shared GP services and the recently constructed Welsh-medium provision to cover the whole of the Garw valley to be based in Bettws.



The Cardiff West proposal, adding the wards of Brynnau, Llanharri and Llanharan reflect no community connect, connection to these communities at all, and there would be astonishment that they could ever be part of a Cardiff West constituency. Finally, the Rhondda constituency proposal does not acknowledge the fact that Pencoed town or Bryncethin use all services linked to Bridgend.

Given the concerns in the response from constituents includi..., around including wards that form part of Bridgend town in the Aberafan Porthcawl proposal, the Commission may wish to consider an initial proposal to a minor change. Given the close community ties these residential areas have to the town of Bridgend, a more minor adjustment would be the ward of Llangennith and Brynhyfryd with the ward of Cefn Glas becoming part of the proposed Bridgend constituency. Both areas are interconnected with large housing estates constructed over many years and linked via education, health and community services.

Although it is understood the Commission will not consider ward boundaries, it should be noted beyond May 2022, they become one ward. This would leave the Aberafan constituency with 73,554 people at the lower end of the quota and Bridgend just over at 77,626. To accommodate this the ward of Cefn Cribwr could move from the proposed Bridgend constituency to the proposed Aberafan Porthcawl constituency to increase and rebalance numbers. Cefn Cribwr already share services with Kenfig Hill and Pyle, and the Commission will be aware Kenfig Hill and Pyle already form part of proposed Aberafan and Porthcawl constituency.

Chair: Just made it. [laughs]

CE: You started saying, thank you, thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Chris. Can I ask my ACs if they've got any questions for clarification? Good. Anyone in the audience would like to ask any questions for clarification purposes? No? Well, Chris, Diolch. Can I ask for that to be....

CE: We've emailed the notes. We've done that this morning. Should be with you.

Chair: Fantastic. Thank you.

CE: Okay. Thank you.

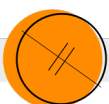
Chair: Diolch.

CE: Thank you very much.

[00:17:54]

Chair: Okay. Yeah. Our next contributor is Siân Boyles, who's contributing in an individual capacity.

SB: Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity this afternoon to address you. I'll start again. Thank you for the opportunity this afternoon to address you. My name is



Siân Boyles and I'm representing the residents of Hengoed as, in my personal capacity.

I refer to the published propose, initial proposals for the redrawing of the constituency boundaries and would like to make the following comments to the, be considered as part of the initial consultation process.

As a resident of Hengoed, I'm concerned the initial proposal to divide the current Caerphilly constituency between four new constituencies, but I'm particularly concerned by the suggestions that the lower part of the present Caerphilly constituency be linked to the western part of the current Newport West constituency to create a new constituency of Newport West and Caerphilly, and the current middle areas of the Caerphilly constituency to form the new Islwyn constituency.

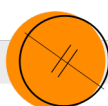
The counterproposal put forward by Wayne David MP for Caerphilly to create a new Caerphilly constituency electors of 75,092 and the new Newport West and Islwyn constituency electors of 70,031 that fit in with the criteria of the Commission's, without any residual impact to the neighbouring constituencies.

I've lived in the Rhymney Valley all my life and I have never identified as being tied into Newport for any leisure or business activities, and my engagement is mainly within Cardiff. One of the main reasons for this is the much better travel links between my home and Cardiff, be it by car or by public transport. The road links to Cardiff are much better than to Newport, and to travel by train to Newport I would have to leave the county, go to Cardiff first. And travelling by bus, to reach part of the proposed new constituency, I would first have to go into Newport city centre and then travel outwards. This is also evident in the travel of the employment for the residents of the Rhymney Valley, more likely to travel south to Cardiff for employment rather than east to Newport.

[00:20:28]

The counterproposal is preferable to, to the initial proposal to the Boundary Commission's under, in a number of respects. It takes into account the special geographical con..., considerations, notably by the large rural gap between the communities of Machen in the Caerphilly constituency and Rhiwderyn in the Graig ward of Newport West. The proximity of the communities of Risca and Crosskeys in the Islwyn constituency to Rogerston in the Newport West constituency, and the close natural connections between the wards of Blackwood, Pontllanfraith, Cefn Fforest, Pengam and Maesycymer, all in the Islwyn constituency. They are connected to the wards of Llanbradach, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed and St Cattwg which are in the Caerphilly constituency. And until recently Maesycymer was actually in the Caerphilly constituency. In this part of South Wales, the valleys in the Rhymney Valley and the Sirhywi Valley are relatively wide, and the communication in this area between the communities is easy and straightforward.

In terms of local ties, geography, history and identity, there are much more stronger links between the electors in, within both constituencies in that proposal than in the Boundary Commission's initial proposal. It is fundamentally the case that the communities alongside the near Rhymney Valley have tended to look



towards the city of Cardiff, whereas the communities in the east of the Sirhywi Valley look into Gwent and looked into Gwent and still look into Gwent and the city of Newport.

One major factor for the new geography of the Rhymney Valley is the Rhymney River which flows through the majority the village proposed in these changes, Pengam, Hengoed, Ystrad Mynach and Llanbradach, with villages such as Senghenydd, Abertridwr flowing their rivers into the Rhymney at Caerphilly, on through Bedwas and Trethomas and Machen and then out into the Severn. Geographically, for hundreds of years and generations, communities and industries in the Rhymney Valley have grown and developed around the Rhymney River.

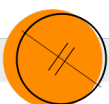
Rhymney Valley has been, for generations, dominated by the coal industry and the communities have grown through that, and the workers crossed the valley from north to south to find work and settling in various villages, making links stretching from Senghenydd in the south to Penallta in the middle, Llanbradach and then up to Deri at the far north of the valley. Although the mining industries are long gone, the valley communities, bonds and histories, these still remain strong to this day in these communities.

There's a cultural history that connects these villages and communities as well through the Welsh language, and the schools in the local area and the children filter in for various schools from Senghenydd to Abertridwr, Caerphilly, Hengoed, Ystrad Mynach, Maescymer - to name but a few – all feed in to the only Welsh-medium comprehensive school within the county with the two sites set over, one in Caerphilly which is the Gwyndy and the other up in Fleur-de-lis which is Gelli Haf. Can also add in the strong sporting connections from the Rhymney Valley where the villages all feed.... If you want to take rugby as an example, of the grassroots all feed in from village teams into the larger clubs such as Penallta, Bedwas, Blackwood and Caerphilly.

So the Rule Five in Schedule Two of the Act specifies a number of factors that the Commission may take into account. In particular, the size, shape and accessibility of constituencies and local ties, and that would be broken by changes in the, in these constituencies. The Commission considers that existing community boundaries are likely to have been created in recognising these local ties and, therefore, are likely to reflect local ties. The Commission's policy is therefore not to divide existing communities. Unless there are no other available solutions that will enable compliance with the statutory electorate range, I believe that is viable in this proposal.

[00:24:00]

The counterproposal shares with the Commission's initial proposal the division of the city of Newport, but we placed the identity wards of Newport West with the truncated constituency, constituency of Islwyn rather than with the town of Caerphilly and its environs. The counterproposals and the initial proposal both cover two local authority areas. These proposals would not have a knock-on effect on other constituencies outside of the three relevant constituencies. In other words, the counterproposal relocate the wards in the Boundary Commissions' demarcation of Newport, Caerphilly and Islwyn. I believe as a resident of Caerphilly



constituency, it's overwhelmingly the case that there is a much stronger community and trust within the two constituencies identified in Wayne David MP's counterproposal and would ask that you could carefully consider this proposal. Diolch yn fawr am eich amser.

Chair: Diolch. Siân, can I just get a clarification? In the beginning, you said you were speaking in the capacity of a resident of Hengoed and then you said on behalf of residents of Hengoed. Which one is it, just....?

SB: As a resident of Hengoed, yeah, sorry.

Chair: As a resident. Okay.

SB: Just a bit nervous. [laughs]

Chair: No, that's fine. [laughs] I just wanted to make sure that you weren't speaking on behalf of a group. Okay, thank you. Do my ACs have any questions?

Unknown male: No.

Chair: Huw?

RP: Thank you very much. Roger Pratt, from the Conservative Party. You've just confirmed to the Secretary of the Commission that you are a resident of Hengoed and you talked about, from Hengoed not going to Newport and not having any connection with Newport. The Commission's proposals don't put you in a seat with Newport, do they?

SB: No, I said that the Caerphilly would be in Newport and Hengoed would be in Islwyn. The connections, they're with Islwyn.

RP: Oh, okay. But you wouldn't actually be in a constituent? You, personally, wouldn't be in a constituent.

SB: Personally I wouldn't, no. But the community links would.

RP: Okay, thank you.

SB: Thank you.

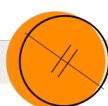
Chair: Are there any more questions from the audience? No? Thank you, Siân.

[00:25:58]

SB: Diolch.

Chair: Diolch. Right, what time is it? Is it half-one?

Unknown male: Half-one, yeah, just now, spot on.



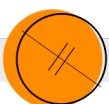
Chair: Our next speaker's not scheduled 'til one-forty but can I check if Andrew Rice is here? Oh, there we are. One sec. Are you okay to come up after? Yeah. Is Thomas Henry-Jones here? Oh, perfect. So you'll come on after Andrew, if that's all right. Yeah? okay, our next speaker will be Andrew Rice, who is here as an individual contributor. Thank you.

AR: Thank you. And thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak this afternoon. As you say, I'm here as a resident of the Vale of the Glamorgan and I'm here in an individual capacity. I've been a resident in the Vale of Glamorgan since 1993 and I've been working in the Vale of Glamorgan since 1991. Up until this time, last year, I was a police officer in the Vale of Glamorgan and, pertinently, for the matters I wish to discuss today which is the proposed change of Dinas Powys ward from the Vale of Glamorgan to Cardiff South and Penarth, I was also police commander for Penarth and the rural vale, not including Barry, between 2018 and 2020. I now work as a caseworker for Alun Cairns, the Vale of Glamorgan MP but I'm not here on behalf of Mr Cairns, I'm not here on behalf the Conservative Party. I've got to stress this as a personal capacity that I'm speaking in. Any views are my own, they don't reflect the Conservative Party and nor do they reflect, I have to stress this, South Wales Police. I'm not here to represent South Wales Police or any opinions they may have on these matters.

So the proposal as I understand it, is that the Dinas Powys ward will move from its current position within the Vale of Glamorgan constituency to the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency. I cannot see the sense in that. If we just look at the geography of the constituents at the moment, Dinas Powys is a ward, is a large geographic area. It doesn't border Cardiff except in the northern part of the geography of the ward and at that point, there is literally a physical barrier of the dual carriageway A4232. In order, normally, to travel from Dinas Powys to Cardiff, you have to pass through Llandough or through Penarth. So there's not a natural fit geographically, and Dinas Powys some would say, some would consider, a suburb or Cardiff, a commuter suburb of Cardiff. That may be true of some of the estates within the village of Dinas Powys but Dinas Powys itself, the ward, is a rural ward. You only have to look at the map to see the size of the ward, and the actual village of Dinas Powys is only a small part of that ward. It's a rural ward with a large number of farms and rural communities, and it sits naturally within the wider Vale of Glamorgan, another rural constituency. To me, it makes no sense to move what is essentially a rural community into the urban community of Cardiff South and Penarth.

[00:29:36]

And as a Vale resident I'm concerned about, what I would call a loss of identity for the, for the Vale of Glamorgan. The Vale of Glamorgan will naturally suffer, being on the borders of Cardiff, that the investment, the economic investment, the attention, the infrastructure tends to be focused in Cardiff. And it's my view that the communities of the Vale of Glamorgan, including Dinas Powys, need their own representative to act on their behalf and not, potentially suffer from being considered as part of Cardiff. Certainly, I'm not a Dinas Powys resident, I should have stressed that at the start. I'm a Rhosee resident and I am a Vale of Glamorgan resident. I feel keenly that the Vale of Glamorgan is a separate entity, it's a separate unitary authority and is separate from Cardiff. And this proposed, these proposals



in the, in terms of boundary changes take a significant geographic part of the Vale of Glamorgan and place it within a Cardiff constituency and as a Vale of Glamorgan resident, I feel that's eroding the identity of the Vale of Glamorgan. And certainly, I feel that individuals living within the rural communities of the Dinas Powys ward are likely to feel the same thing. And I question whether the, whoever the elected representative is for the new ward, should it go ahead, and this is in no way a criticism of any person who may end up taking on that role, inevitably their attention will be focused on, on Cardiff. There are a lot of social problems in Cardiff South and I was aware of this as a police officer that the attention was very much focused on Cardiff, and the Vale was considered sometimes as a bit of an afterthought. Now, I'm not suggesting for a minute that the problems that, and the social issues within the Cardiff South constituency are not significant, but if I was a Va..., Dinas Powys resident, I would want my elected representative to be looking out for my issues. And I feel that by moving the ward into Cardiff South and Penarth, the focus is going to be on the Cardiff South part of it. And even if that's not the case, even if that isn't actually the case, the perception of voters, the perception of residents in the ward may be that it is, and I just feel at a personal level that this is the wrong move, it does not really look at the character, it doesn't look at the geography and it's, if I understand the proposals correctly, it's a move simply based on numbers of residents rather than actual integrity of communities. And that would be my observation. I would ask the Commission to consider those comments when they make their final decision. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Do my ACs'...? Steven?

SP: Yes, thank you. And thank you for the presentation. I think you've been very clear about the view from Dinas Powys as it were. But can I ask whether you reflected upon the fact or, that if Dinas Powys was removed from Cardiff South and Penarth, that would leave that constituency well short of the statutory minimum and potentially lead to some possibly fairly comprehensive or the necessity of some comprehensive changes elsewhere within Cardiff?

AR: Sorry, you can see... currently the constituency isn't part of the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency. You're suggesting that by not moving it into that constituency, the numbers will be...?

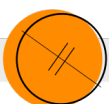
SP: If you remove Dinas Powys from the, from the configuration in the initial proposals, that leaves, by my calculations, Cardiff South and Penarth some 6,000 electors short of the minimum.

[00:33:52]

AR: I can't comment on the numbers and I can't argue that point, but I made the, the comment towards the end of my presentation that the proposals are solely based on numbers, they don't look at the identity...

SP: Okay.

AR: Of the, of the ward and the needs of the residents within that ward.



AC: Okay. Can I just check, do you see the cultural identity of Dinas Powys in itself or do you see that that identity needs to be connected to the Vale of Glamorgan? Because if it's placed either way, it will still retain its own cultural identity.

AR: Dinas, Dinas Powys is part of the Vale of Glamorgan at the moment, and I think by moving it to, my personal opinion, by moving it into Cardiff South and Penarth, you're lessening the identity of Dinas Powys because you're considering it as part of Cardiff, as a suburb of Cardiff. And it's my view it is not a suburb of Cardiff, it is a separate town, a separate ward and it's part of the Vale of Glamorgan.

AC: Okay.

Chair: Is there anyone in the audience who would like to ask any questions for clarification. If not? Thank you, Andrew.

AR: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Diolch, Hugh. Can I invite Thomas Henry-Jones to come up, please?

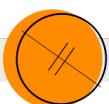
THJ: Good afternoon, I'm, my name is Tom and I'm speaking as a Cardiff resident who works within the Vale of Glamorgan, and I'll be speaking on why I believe that Dinas Powys should remain as part of the Vale of Glamorgan. I believe it should remain as part of the Vale of Glamorgan because of geographic, social and sort of community factors, as well as a strong identity that I believe that Dinas has with the Vale of Glamorgan. I inherently believe that Dinas is a rural community. It's a village, it's a small community, and it risks being subsumed by the Metropolitan sort of urban centre that is Cardiff South. I believe that has not really any ties with Cardiff and it doesn't look to Cardiff in the same sort of way that Penarth does. Yeah, I just believe that the strong community identity of Dinas risks being swallowed up by the urban centre that is Cardiff.

Geographically, Dinas has been part of the vale for sort of hundreds of years, and I think it just recognises, I think it sees within itself that it's part of the Vale. It's administrative hub is Barry. This is not set to change. I think people look to Barry for sort of healthcare, for jobs, for economic social reasons, and I don't think that is set to change with the proposed sort of, if this, if this is implemented, I believe that Dinas will always look towards Barry rather than Cardiff or Penarth.

[00:36:55]

One strong reason as well, as I feel that these proposed changes will risk confusing constituents. In Dinas Powys, if, if they are to be moved to within Penarth and Cardiff, residents of Penarth regularly confuse who is, who is their MP because of the vale unitary council boundaries. This proposed move will just, I believe, create greater confusion.

If Dinas does become part of Penarth, they'll have Steven Doughty as their MP but the Vale Council as their unitary authority as well as local councillors, but then they're also have Jane Hutt as their member of the Senedd in, who's the Vale. I dunno if that's such a change but, I believe those, these sort of proposed moves



will cause greater confusion for constituents who sort of seek support, and they might not seek that support if they're confused as to who their representative is.

One more point. I believe the transport links between Dinas and Cardiff are, are not that great. I believe if you travel by car to Cardiff, it can take up to 20 minutes, especially with the poor traffic, and the links between Dinas and Penarth are especially quite weak. You'd have to get a train from Dinas into Cardiff to change to get back out to Penarth. There's not that direct link between Dinas and Penarth.

So in conclusion, I just believe this comes down to local ties and the strong community identity that is Dinas Powys. I believe that it is a rural small village community that risks being swallowed up by the urban centre that is Cardiff and it risks being ignored. This move will cause greater administrative confusion and will damage strong community identity. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Are there any questions for clarification? I've got one, sorry. You mentioned around Dinas Powys and it's strong. You know, it's east Barry, it's an administrative hub. So if we had to rejig and move them all together...?

THJ: Which, move...?

Chair: Dinas Powys and Barry.

THJ: As one to Cardiff?

Chair: Yeah. Would, is the issue that these are all Vale of Glamorgan people?

THJ: Yeah.

Chair: Is that the crux of it, just to clarify?

THJ: I just believe that Dinas more, Dinas more relates more to Barry than it does to Cardiff. So I feel if you did move Barry and Dinas together, then it probably be a little bit left initially, I agree.

Chair: Okay, just for clarification. That's all. Thank you.

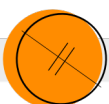
[00:39:14]

AC: Can I just check also, just relation to the last speaker as well and Steve's point, by not moving, you create a smaller cohort. What, have you thought about how you'd resolve that?

THJ: At the minute, the Vale of Glamorgan has got the correct amount of numbers and I feel, yeah, by changing that you're just ruining one part of the vale just to solve another problem, if you see what I mean? So, yeah.

AC: Okay, okay.

Chair: Is anyone from the audience would like to ask a question for clarification? No? That's it.



THJ: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Our next speaker is not due to be here 'til 10 past two. So I suggest a, I know we've just started at one, I'm going to have to suggest a comfort break until [laughs] our next speaker is here just because of the time difference. Yeah, it's quarter to, so if he turns up for two then hopefully you can make a quick start then. So can I suggest we return at two o'clock? That's okay? Thank you.

KH: ...far less engagement of local communities. Most people had very little understanding of what was being proposed and very few people had the capacity to challenge anything. Over the last 40 years, things have improved a little. And I'll go on now to my experience as secretary of the Caerphilly Miners Centre. I've been the secretary of the project since 2008. I got involved because I happened to hear in 2006 that our much loved local hospital was going to close, and apart from some desultory public meetings there was no opportunity until 2008 to make effective representations as part of the local development plan about the future of the building.

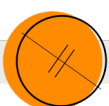
For the next two years, until the adoption of the 2010 local development plan, our proposal to keep part of the Miners Hospital open as a community centre was derided and we were made to feel that we were challenging and possibly undermining the obvious solution to the vacant site, which was to clear the site for housing. My community still harbours resentment that decisions were and are made without them.

14 years on, we are shortly to complete a two thous..., a two-million-pound refurbishment on our iconic building, one which would have been taken down with 350 people a week coming from well beyond the Caerphilly basin to enjoy our services and activities. We have a turnover of over 100,000 a year, and eight new businesses are about to be housed as a well-being therapy hub on the top floor of our building. The point I'm making is that there is always an alternative, one which may be better than the one first saw thought of.

[00:42:25]

I have the opportunity to speak with lots of people from lots of walks of life and over the many years of listening to what people have to say, this has shown me how important it is that people have a sense of place and a local identity, and it helps them with their functioning and wellbeing. It's also very important to keep things simple and to change things as little as possible. So the question I'd like to ask is, why would you want to move the parliamentary boundaries across a county boundary that people understand? Many of my friends and acquaintances cannot understand how these proposed boundaries have come to be drawn in this way. If they'd known about the opportunities for consultation, they would have expressed their bewilderment and hostility to this proposal, and their feelings of being disenfranchised, which they have expressed to me.

The people, the Caerphilly Miners Centre has its own social heritage, which is linked to the 10,000 miners of the 29 pits in the Rhymney Valley. People's memories and sense, sense of identity help to ensure that our communities are resilient. Most of



our acquaintances are proud of Caerphilly, have a strong sense of local identity and their links mostly linked to up the Rhymney Valley rather than to Newport. We have projects and new businesses coming from further north of the boundary but there's very little from the east side of the county, and there's absolutely nothing from Newport.

Caerphilly, as a central place, has a catchment area including the Aber valley, Rhymney Valley, especially up to Bargoed, and Caerphilly and Blackwood traditionally have complementary services, social services provision, shopping facilities, good transport links. Lots of people travel regularly to Blackwood, Ystrad Mynach and Bargoed to see family, go shopping, go to the cinema or meet friends.

I don't believe that there has been an option appraisal for the different possible boundaries for the parliamentary constituency of Caerphilly. I think if this had been done, the option to include Pontllanfraith and Blackwood, rather than to extend to Newport West, would have been put on the table. This makes more sense in terms of people's family identity, social travel patterns, sense of belonging and cultural backgrounds. It would also make more sense for the pound..., parliamentary boundaries to be coterminous as far as possible with the county council and the Welsh Government boundaries. It makes no sense administratively to randomly pick different boundaries. We've seen this with the reorganisation of health and social care, local government, voluntary sector, public utilities and police boundaries all being different. It is a complete nightmare for citizens to know where to go, and it must be equally difficult for people representing us.

We'd like to think that our MP has our interests at heart when he or she represents us. How can MPs do this if they are representing disparate areas with no commonality of interest? We have no connection with Newport, we hardly ever go there except for the Royal Gwent, and Newport people hardly ever come to us except for the annual Big Cheese. There is nothing to make us part of Newport West and equally, we don't understand why they'd want to be part of Caerphilly. So we're not confident in these proposals that our interests would be represented adequately and so, please think again.

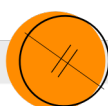
Chair: Thank you. Assistant commissioners?

[00:46:22]

AC: Just that it's more of a reassurance really that, in a sense, this whole exercise is an options reappraisal, and that's why it's really useful to have people like you and the feedback of you and your community to feed into the process to enable thinking to take place.

Chair: Thank you. Is there any questions or points for clarification from the audience? No? Thank you Katherine. Jeff, can you give us two minutes just to sanitise and I'll call you, I'll invite you to speak? Thanks.

Up next, our contributor is Jeff Cuthbert. Jeff, you've got 10 minutes. At the eight-minute mark, my colleague at the back there will show you a two-minute warning and you'll have two minutes to wrap up. At the 10-minute mark, I'll have to interrupt and give you 30 seconds to wrap up.



JC: It's okay. I've timed it at eight minutes.

Chair: Oh fab.

JC: That's a copy of my, what I'm gonna say.

Chair: If I could ask, oh, you've got it in your speech, so there we are. If you wanna kick start, you've got your 10 minutes. Go on.

JC: Thank you. My name is Jeff Cuthbert and I am the former Assembly Member for the Caerphilly constituency. Currently, I am the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent. Now, the changing of parliamentary boundaries does not impact on policing, although changing local authorities' boundaries would. Consequently, I am making this submission as a private citizen, albeit as a very interested one.

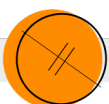
I realise of course that the Commission has been given the task of reducing the number of parliamentary seats in Wales. This is an unenviable task that is bound to focus on numbers of constituents per constituency rather than established integrity of communities. However, it is the integrity of communities that I believe to be more important and that is what I intend to focus on.

I wish to place on record my opposition to the changes proposed by the Commission to remove the constituency of Caerphilly entirely and to divide that constituency amongst other new constituencies in southeast Wales. Furthermore, I wish to place on record my support for the counterproposals put forward by Wayne David MP. My reasons are as follows.

The town of Caerphilly is the largest town in Gwent. It is located at the confluence of several valleys and consequently has been seen as the main market centre for this part of South Wales over many generations. Indeed, going back into history, it is not difficult to understand why a major castle was built at this site given its strategic and commercial importance. Caerphilly Castle is the second largest castle in Europe and is regularly branded as a major location for films and TV, as well as being a major tourist attraction.

[00:49:46]

The constituency of Caerphilly was formed in 1918 in recognition of its growing importance as a distinctive commercial and cultural centre, and particularly as a centre for coal mining near the town and in its hinterland to the north, west and east. In 1996, following local government reorganisation, the former Mid Glamorgan County Council, Gwent County Council, the Rhymney Valley District Council and Islwyn District Council were abolished in favour of a single unitary authority. That single unitary authority was named Caerphilly County Borough Council, even though it extended from the town of Caerphilly as far north as Rhymney, as far east as Crumlin, as far west as Nelson and the Aber Valley and took in many communities in between. The name of Caerphilly County Borough Council was given in recognition of the status of the town of Caerphilly. The county borough contains within its borders the entire constituencies of Caerphilly and Islwyn and the eastern part of the Merthyr and Rhymney constituency.



The current proposals of the Commission is to merge much of the southern part of the existing Caerphilly constituency with much of the Newport West constituency and form a new constituency. I do not believe that such a proposal will gather meaningful support from the people of Caerphilly or those of Newport West. This is because the two areas have very, a very different history, geography, industrial heritage and transport infrastructure.

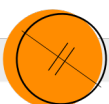
Taking the latter point of transport infrastructure, it's true that there is a main road from Caerphilly to Newport, the A468, which is serviced by a bus route. However, the main transport links are not to Newport but are to Cardiff with the A469 travelling south to Cardiff and the dual carriageway of the A470 just a mile or so away. Furthermore, the main Cardiff Valley's rail route links Cardiff with Caerphilly and as far north as Rhymney. There is no direct rail link to Newport from Caerphilly. One would have to travel to Cardiff first and then get a different train to Newport. Incidentally, the proposal put forward by Wayne David MP would link the eastern parts of the current Islwyn constituency with Newport, and there is now a spur to the Ebbw Vale to Cardiff rail line which would allow direct travel to Newport at certain times of the day.

On the issue of industrial heritage, the two areas are very different. As mentioned, Caerphilly over the last 100 years was very much a centre for coal mining. There were several collieries in the surrounding villages with large numbers of miners and their families living in Caerphilly. Indeed, until the mid-1980s, the largest delegations at the management committee of the Caerphilly Labour Party came from the mining lodges. Now as you've just heard, for the, furthermore, it was the miners working of the Collieries around Caerphilly that collected subscriptions to set up the Caerphilly District Miners Hospital in the 1920s, which survived as a local hospital until the opening of the new Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr in 2011. Newport is very different. Its industrial heritage is firmly linked to its role as a port. There are many facilities for seamen from a wide range of nationalities who have settled in Newport after life on the seas. I cannot think of any commonality between the two communities.

[00:53:29]

In terms of health, the Caerphilly Heart Study is one of the world's longest-running, and I'll do my best with this word, epidemiology studies. Since 1975, a representative sample of adult males born between 19 and 1938 living in Caerphilly and a number of surrounding villages have taken part in the study. A wide range of health and lifestyle data have been collected throughout the study. That data has been the basis for over 400 publications in the medical press. A notable report was on the reductions in vascular disease, diabetes, cognitive impairment and dementia attributable to a healthy lifestyle.

Now, if the Commission's proposals go ahead, then the MP for the new seat will have to deal with two very different local authorities depending on where the constituent lives. As someone who was an elected member of the Welsh Assembly for 13 years, I can confirm that it is far better to develop meaningful relationships with just one set of local authority leaders and officials. This will result in a better, faster and more consistent service for the constituents.



Wayne David proposes to move the communities of Blackwood, Maesycymer, Pontllanfraith and Cefn Fforest from the Islwyn constituency to a new Caerphilly constituency. This is a sensible suggestion because all of these communities border the current Caerphilly constituency and are wards within Caerphilly County Borough Council. It is acknowledged that the communities of Bargoed and Gilfach will be lost to another constituency to the north. That is a shame but it can, on balance, be accepted provided that the additions referred to above are accepted.

To remove Caerphilly as a discrete parliamentary seat would end over 100 years of distinct identity. The linking of Caerphilly with part of Newport may produce an arithmetic justification in terms of the electorate, but would ignore the essentially very different history and geographic differences between the two. Consequently, I urge the Commission to rethink their proposal accordingly. Thank you.

Chair: AC's? Steven, do you wanna? You've got a couple of points for clarification.

SP: Thank you. This is essentially the same question that I asked a couple of speakers earlier, but can I take it that your overarching priority here is the retention of the Caerphilly constituency and that perhaps, where the boundaries might be drawn, a secondary consideration, particularly, as we've heard this morning, representations about the position of Nelson, which is currently excluded from the Caerphilly, the proposed Caerphilly Newport West constituency under the initial proposals?

JC: Yeah. I think the broad answer to that question is yes. It's, it's not just a question of the name Caerphilly, it is about its reasonable hinterland. So I would be supportive of that, yes, in general terms.

SP: Okay. Thank you.

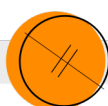
Chair: Thank you. Andrew? No? Arun, have you got...? No. Anyone from the audience? No? Diolch, Jeff.

JC: Okay, thank you very much.

Chair: Okay. Our next speaker will not be here until 3pm, so we've got three speakers booked for the next session and we'll resume proceedings at 3pm. Diolch.

[00:57:02]

... to the afternoon session, we have three speakers booked for this particular session in the public hearing. All speakers will be given 10-minute slots. At the eight-minute mark, my colleague, Tom Jenkins at the back will give you a two-minute warning. You'll have two minutes to wrap up. At the 10-minute mark, I will interrupt you and give you 30 seconds to say your final words and then you'll be stopped and we'll open up the session for points of clarification from the panel and the audience. When you're invited up, please can I ask you to state your name clearly, the town or area of residence and your affiliation, primarily if you're speaking on your, as an individual or on behalf of a group, please name the group. Our first speaker is Lindsay Whittle.



LW:

Good afternoon, panel. Please forgive the black tie. I've come from a funeral, I hope it's not an omen on the loss of the Caerphilly constituency. My name is Lindsay Whittle. I live in Church Road in Abertridwr. I'm speaking as an individual. I, I have a passion for local politics and I have done so since I was 14 years of age when I used to go from Caerphilly Boys' Grammar School straight across to the council chamber. And I want to express my disappointment with the review that now will place the major county town of Caerphilly that has had its own elected Member of Parliament since the early 1900s into an area which is, I understand, to be Newport West and Caerphilly, an area where we have very little connections with and that city vice versa.

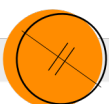
I think the electorate deserve more respect than that simple waving of a pen on a map. We are not numbers on a page. Traditionally, an area that was made Mid Glamorgan County Council is now to be, then was included under Mid Glamorgan County Council following that reorganisation. We are now to be annexed to a city, as I've said, that has very little traditional connection. It's Newport in Monmouthshire County Council as was and then Gwent. Additionally, we were part of Caerphilly Urban District Council. 1971 saw us reorganised into Rhymney Valley District Council. I was honoured then to be elected at 23 years of age as a councillor to Rhymney Valley and, at 24 years of age, to Mid Glamorgan County Council. So I do feel as I can speak of those valleys with some pride and some passion. I know the people who I grew up with there will understand what I'm saying. It's where I, I belong, really and I don't think I belong - with the greatest of respect - to Newport.

Traditionally, in, in the Rhymney Valley, we've travelled north to south. We very rarely go east to west. Most people tend to work in Cardiff, most Caerphilly people will shop and socialise in Cardiff and it's only the Gwent Valleys people that traditionally have associated themselves with that very proud city, now called Newport. And, indeed, I was present at the ceremony when Newport was awarded city status. I think it would have made more sense to incorporate the history of the old administration of Rhymney Valley District, that would have taken the figures to about 77,000 electorate because people have been used to that since 1974. Indeed, the old Caerphilly constituency did include much of the area as well. So there's already a tradition that this proposal will now lose, and I don't think people will be happy, both in Newport and Caerphilly.

[01:00:52]

I cannot believe that people will vote for a Newport MP to represent this major town. There are, I'm passionate about politics, as I've said. I'm 69 now, I'm coming to the end of my political life, but there are wards and villages in Newport that I have never ever visited in my life. I've never been to Rogerstone. If you dropped me in the middle of the village, I wouldn't have a clue where I was. I drive through Bassaleg to get to the M4. I only know the main road.

Caerphilly deserves a Member of Parliament in its own right. Traditionally, the mining industry has been foremost in our representatives, miners agents, conscientious objectors like Morgan Jones and Ness Edwards, all with the backing of the old National Union of Mineworkers Lodges. This is now to be swept away at the stroke of a pen by people, with the greatest of respect, have no idea of our traditions and history. I have contested the Caerphilly constituency for nine general elections and three Senedd elections and I can tell you, I believe people will genuinely be disenfranchised and will possibly protest and fail to vote. Is this what



democracy needs at this particularly critical time? I think not. I, the last general election saw the turnout fall to 66%. It's the lowest in our history. So it's tough enough to get people to vote now, regardless of what political parties they have, have supported. Political parties are struggling to find local candidates. People, I believe, need to know who they are elected representative is, regardless of whether they support my party or any other party. We get people now contesting Caerphilly from Brighton. What do they know about our valleys? And if they see Newport East, they won't, they won't have a clue. People in Newport East probably won't even know where parts of, of Abertridwr and Senghenydd and Penyrheol and Graig yr Accar is.

The point I hope I make is, if we want people to take politicians seriously, there has to be a sense of belonging. I would be more than happy to offer you my services to help look at these wards, look at the map. And just don't look at, at, at an area of land, look at the topography and the contours. My old geography teacher who was a Labour councillor, by the way, would be very proud. We travel north to south, not east to west. You may ask, why, why is he doing this at the end of his political career? Well, I'll tell you for why. It's my town. These are my villages. It's my valley. These are my people and it's where I belong. And I think I want to tell the world, tell the civil service, tell Westminster really, we are Caerphilly, and it genuinely means absolutely everything to us. Thank you so much for listening. Thank you.

Chair: Diolch, Lindsay, could I ask you to remain so we can ask any of the AC's? Steven? Go ahead. Points for clarification.

LW: Yes, certainly.

[01:04:02]

SP: I think you've been very clear about your, your attachment to Caerphilly, but I'm sure you'll understand that we, whilst this isn't just purely a numbers game, we have to balance the number of electors in each constituency as set out in the initial proposals. So without going necessarily into a ward by ward analysis, could you give me some sort of idea where the boundary between a Caerphilly constituency and, particularly the constituencies to the east would, would, would begin or end, particularly as we've heard today that there are other issues in and around Caerphilly? So, for example, we've had representations about the Nelson community...

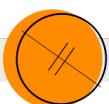
LW: Yes.

SP: And there are, the permutations are myriad. What would your preference be in general terms?

LW: It's probably easier to choose a Welsh rugby team, and, and there we've got 3 million selectors, I know. But...

SP: We've not gonna try and do that.

LW: Yes, yes. [laughs] Indeed. No, nor me. But, seriously, the Rhymney Valley was, was a concept born out of the Rhymney Urban District Council, Bargoed, Gelligaer,



Caerphilly and Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen. Now, once you reach Machen, there's a seven or eight-mile drive to get into the village of Bassaleg, and that's where you start to hit Newport and you know you're getting on to the M4. I know the main road like the back of my hand through Bassaleg, but I don't know the estates either side of it and the villages, as I've said, of Rogerstone. So we don't feel an affinity to it, but we do feel an affinity - lots of people from the Rhymney Valley in Deri and Fochriw and Pontlottyn, New Tredegar, they will travel into the town of Bargoed. People from Bargoed, and vice versa. People from Bargoed will travel down into Ystrad Mynach and vice versa. People from Ystrad Mynach will travel into Caerphilly and vice versa because the road and rail network is there, so it, it, it's a perfect linear connection. You know, ,it, it, it j..., the road gets us into Cardiff easier. To get into Newport, it's a twisty, narrow bus journey. Until I was about 25, I'd only ever been to Newport three times in my life and the bus went on a, a, a twisty journey through, through villages. Okay, the highway network has got much better now, but the Rhymney Valley is such a perfect concept and it fits the figures.

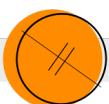
Look at the old district councils that, that, that we've had for the whole of the South Wales Valleys, and you will see that the valleys literally are like dominos. But, but once you get to the city of Cardiff and the city of Newport and then to the, further west, to the city of Swansea, well they're pretty compact themselves. So you can do something with the figures there but, but really, if, if you want to keep the people of the valleys, all of the valleys now, on side, keep them north to south, keep them in their.... They, they generally from '74 to '95, they got used to Rhymney valley. It was only in '95 when I was elected on to Caerphilly Urban District Council, and I've been a councillor for 45 years now, when I got elected on to Caerphilly Council, I had to drive to Risca, which was part of the new Caerphilly, to even see what the town was like. Again, in 1995, I had never been to the town of, of Risca.

[01:07:30]

So, you know, I think a Member of Parliament needs to have an affinity. When you go to Allt-yr-yn, which is a very posh area of Cardiff, of Newport sorry, where I have been once in my life. I was delivering leaflets there for a by election and there were fantastic houses. Please come to the village where I live which has suffered some, it's getting a little better now 'cause we've just had some massive refurbishment, but there were derelict shops, shops knocked down. The people of Allt-yr-yn would have no idea that this is a Community First area, that we have food banks, which I work in as a volunteer, you know? It's totally different to the wonderful suburbs of Newport East. And I'm not knocking the wonderful suburbs of Newport East. Good luck to those people. But I, I just can't see the correlation that a, that a Member of Parliament would, would be able to have the same passion for.

Rhymney Valley is a pretty good, stable constituency and, an everybody, we, we're almost always related. Whenever you get rehoused on Caerphilly, you know, they probably can't rehouse you now on the council's list in, in the Caerphilly town, so they might send you to Ystrad Mynach, or to Bargoed, or to Deri and Fochriw, but they certainly wouldn't send you to Newport.

SP: Okay, Thank you.



LW: Certainly wouldn't.

Chair: Diolch.

LW: I'm bashing your.... I speak with my hands, which I shouldn't do, sorry.

Chair: Are there any points of clarification from the audience? No? Diolch, Lindsay.

LW: Diolch yn fawr a diolch am wrando.

AC: Great.

SP: Diolch.

Chair: Can I invite a member of the Senedd, Andrew RT Davis to address us? Andrew, you've got 10 minutes. At the eight minute-mark, you will be given a two-minute signal. At the 10 -minute mark, I'll have to, I'll interrupt you and give you 30 seconds to wrap up.

ARTD: Hopefully I won't take the time.

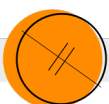
Chair: Hopefully not. [laughs] Go ahead. And after you've given your evidence, please just remain there and we'll open up the floor for clarification. Diolch.

ARTD: Thank you for inviting me along this afternoon to make my presentation. I do recall doing this at the last boundary review and so I hope you, as a Boundary Commission, have greater success than the previous one, because this is an important piece of work to make sure that there is balance within the constituencies of Wales and I fully support the overall aims of what is sought to do by changing the configuration of the constituencies to make sure the votes of the MPs are of equal weight in the House of Commons.

[01:10:09]

I submitted a written representation and I'm grateful to be able to amplify the contents of that written representation here today at the oral hearings. I've been a Senedd member and, before that, a member of the National Assembly for Wales since 2007 representing the South Wales Central Constituency, which covers eight parliamentary constituencies in total.

I agree entirely with the Commission's proposals when it comes to the Rhondda consti, constituency, and I support the Commission's proposals in relation to the constituencies within the South Wales Central area, with the exception of the points that I'd like to make in relation to the Vale of Glamorgan, which I broadly welcome the overall Commission decision to retain the Vale of Glamorgan constituency, but I'm deeply concerned that the Dinas Powys ward has been transferred over to Cardiff South and Penarth. Residents of Dinas Powys very much look to Barry and Wenvoe for their services rather than to the city of Cardiff and the town of Penarth. There are no direct train links between Dinas Powys and Penarth, for example, so residents inevitably go to Barry instead for their services.



Similarly, key council services in Dinas Powys are centred around Wenvoe and Barry. I therefore counter the proposal. The existing boundaries should stay as the current Vale of Glamorgan constituencies are retained. The existing constituency is the only one in Wales that, to have the electoral quota fall within the quota. The Dinas Powys ward, therefore, should stay within the new Vale of Glamorgan constituency.

In relation to Cardiff North, I do not support the proposal for the inclusion of the Taff's Well ward within the Cardiff North constituency. I believe this should remain within the Pontypridd constituency which is located in the Rhondda Cynon Taf council area. While I accept that occasionally, constituencies do have to cross parliamentary boundaries, this should be avoided wherever possible. Similarly, I believe that Llandaff North ward would be better reflect community ties if it was instead included in the Cardiff West constituency. The community of Llandaff North is most closely associated with that of Llandaff. They share many local ties and links. The ties would be better reflected with both communities located in the Cardiff West constituency.

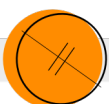
I do not support the proposed inclusion of the LlanRhydney and Rhydney wards within Cardiff Central constituency. Community ties would be better reflected with Rhydney remaining within the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency, and Llanrymney transferring to Cardiff North. The Commission will be aware that the Cardiff Central constituency is urban in nature, containing the city's urban core and many inner city areas. The communities of Llanrymney and Rhydney instead lie of the outskirts of the city and they do not share the links that more, the more metropolitan communities of Cathays, Plasnewydd, Cyncoed, Roath and Penylan do.

[01:13:01]

I also propose that the Riverside ward is included within the Cardiff Central constituency. This community's urban in nature, laying adjacent to the city's central business district. Its housing includes many multiple occupancy dwellings and like neigh, and like the neighbouring constiuten, like, like the neighbouring ward of Cathays. For reasons outlined above, I counterproposal some minor changes to the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency. The Rhydney ward should remain within this constituency, as I believe this better reflects local ties. Similarly, I do not believe it is appropriate to include the Dinas Powys ward within the constituency. Instead, it should remain within the Vale of the Glamorgan constituency which would be better reflected in its links to Wenvoe and Barry.

For the reasons outlined above, I counter propose some minor changes to the Cardiff West constituency. The Riverside ward shares more local characteristics with its neighbouring Cathays ward, with both forming part of Cardiff's urban core. The adjacent ward of Llandaff is suburban in nature and, instead, shares more characteristics with the Llandaff North ward. I therefore counter propose that the Llandaff North ward is included within the Cardiff West constituency, and the Riverside ward is transferred to the Cardiff Central constituency.

I broadly support the creation of the Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare constituency. While the proposed constituency crosses local authority boundaries. the towns of



Methyr Tydfil and Aberdare share many local links. Most prominently, both towns are served by Transport for Wales rail services on the Merthyr line with the Aberdare branch having been reinstated over three decades ago. The existing Merthyr Tiddy, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney constituency, by contrast, share no links. Indeed, a train journey from Merthyr to Rhymney would take over two hours, and passengers would either, from either town wishing to travel to the other would be required to travel to Cardiff to connect, to catch a connecting train. However, I submit some counterproposals to those of the Commission's that have been suggested. I do not believe that Nelson and Cwmbach wards reflect local ties and I suggest they be removed. I would, however, include the Aberaman North and Aberaman South wards, which have very strong ties to the town of Aberdare. I counter propose some minor alterations to the Pontypridd constituency for the reasons outlined above. I submit that the Aberaman North and Aberaman South wards are included within the Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare constituency. I also submit that the Taff's Well and Cwmbach wards are included within the Pontypridd constituency. These wards are all located within the Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority area, and so my counterproposals better reflect local ties.

By putting this submission before the Boundary Commission today in oral form as well as written form, I believe that we maintain the principle of the balance between the constituencies and looking at the South Wales Central region as a whole and the existing parliamentary constituencies and the proposed parliamentary constituencies that the Commission have brought forward, thus meeting the goals of the objective set by Parliament for you as a Boundary Commission, to bring that consistency around the representation of MPs once the general election of 19, of 2024 is undertaken. And for that reason, I submit these proposals to the Commission and would happily take any questions. Thank you.

Chair: Steve?

[01:16:26]

SP: Yes. Thank you. Thank you for the presentation. Just two points of clarification. If I understood what you said correctly, in arithmetical terms, what you're suggesting in relation to Cardiff South and Penarth is that Dinas Powys goes back into the Vale and, arithmetically, it would be replaced by Rhymney?

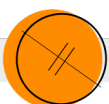
ARTD: That, that is correct.

SP: That's correct. Okay.

ARTD: But I'm conscious that the objective of this is to obviously balance the numbers within 5% of the quota.

SP: Yes. Quite so. Second point was, and I was a bit less clear on the numbers here, but if you take Llandaff North and Taff's Well out of Cardiff North, then that constituency, I think, is well short of the, then well short of the, the statutory electorate minimum. So have you given any consideration to how that will balance out?

ARTD: My proposals talked of putting Llanrymney into Cardiff North and...



SP: Right, okay.

ARTD: Rhymney, obviously, staying in the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency. And that would give you the numbers that you require.

SP: Fine.

ARTD: I do think it is well worth amplifying the strong links between, I've been a representative, as I said in my early opening remarks, since 2007 in the National Assembly for Wales, and now the Senedd. I'm also a Vale of Glamorgan councillor and the principal of the Dinas Powys village always looks to the Vale of Glamorgan, Barry is the principal town. The other towns of the Vale of Glamorgan for services and cultural identity, such as Wenvoe and Cowbridge, and I think dislocating it from the Vale of Glamorgan would be a big mistake on behalf of the community of Dinas Powys.

SP: Thank you. I missed the Llanrymney angle.

Chair: Thank you.

SP: Thank you.

ARTD: Thank you.

Chair: Any points of clarification? No. Diolch, Andrew. Thank you.

ARTD: Thank you very much. Thank you.

Chair: Can I trouble you to email that to us? Is that possible?

[01:18:17]

ARTD: Yes. I think you should have got it already.

Chair: I'll double check later.

ARTD: I'll make sure.

Chair: Thank you.

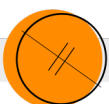
ARTD: Thank you.

Chair: Andrew [inaudible - 1:18:28] [laughs]

Can I invite Vincent Driscoll next, please? Diolch. Hello. Vincent, you were here when I was talking about the 10 and eight-minute mark? You were in the audience?

VD: Yes, yeah.

Chair: Yeah, fab. So I won't repeat myself.



VD: I'm not sure I'll last eight minutes, but...

Chair: [laughs] Okay. That's fine. Go ahead.

VD: Firstly, I'd like to thank Andrew RT speaking on behalf of Dinas Powys. Obviously, I agree with everything he says and it's great to see him back in the public domain. I'm speaking tonight, today as a resident of Dinas Powys although I am a councillor, county councillor, a community council and Chairman of the Vale of Glamorgan constituents, Conservative sorry. I've been a community councillor for prob, I think it's about 15 years now, three, three sessions, and a comm..., Vale councillor for five. Well, almost five. I take more pleasure in the community council role than I do in the Vale. The community council, we seem to get things done, we all work together and it's a privilege to help people of Dinas Powys.

I'd like to strongly oppose your proposal to move to Dinas Powys from the Vale of Glamorgan. Having lived in Dinas Powys all my life I have a strong affinity with the Vale. Very rarely do I venture into Cardiff or Penarth. I think it's the only reasons I ever go to Cardiff really are for Cardiff City or boundary view meetings.

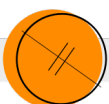
Chair: [laughs]

[01:20:10]

VD: As a family, we've had businesses in Barry all my life, and I shop, we shop there, we visit dentists, we use the opticians, the leisure centres, the gyms and many other facilities. We'd use the out of hours emergency services then of Barry Hospital. When I was, when I was 11 years of age, my friend and I, we formed a football side, Dinas Powys Football Club. 50 years later, it's still going strong. Our first port of call when we set up the league team was to join the Barry and District League, which is now the Vale of Glamorgan League, and we are strong members of that and we have nearly 200 kids playing nearly every week, which is fantastic.

Dinas Powys is a rural community, it's not part of a metropolitan city. It's a village. We've got a fantastic spirit. there are many organisations. DPVC, which is the Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern, they help, help most of the elderly people in the village who need help taxiing back and forth to shops, mostly Barry shops, up to the medical centre, etcetera. We've got a village square, we've got halls, we've got the fantastic open spaces of the common, we've got a hill fort, we've got a normal, Norman castle. It's easier, it's easier to go to Barry than it is to Cardiff. We don't want to be a suburb of Cardiff. Never have been and really don't want to be.

Dinas Powys has got a huge history. It was included in the medieval Welsh political division called the Royal Hundreds. The Vale, 100 Vale. It was known as the Dinas Powys Hundreds. We have a long and proud history with the Norman castle, as I just said, and the hill fort, although both of them are in little bit disrepair nowadays. Dinas Powys has no affinity with the highly dense rural area suburban areas of Grangetown, Butetown, Splott and Trowbridge but has a great affinity with Cowbridge, Ewenny, Ogmere, Llantwit Major, Rhoose, Wenvoe and all the other villages.



In Dinas Powys in December 2020, the worst event in Dinas Powys history, we, we suffered severe floods and over 100 houses were badly affected 48 hours before sitting down for their Christmas dinner. It was an awful occasion. Most of the help we had, well all the help we had was actually from the Vale direction, from fire service to the Vale Council and any other organisation that could help. The train services to Barry are much better than those to Cardiff, there's never busy trains. And also, you can't get to Penarth by train other than going into Cardiff and out. I think putting us in with Cardiff, Cardiff would lose our identity and we, let's have a look, and we're just very proud to be people from Dinas Powys. We don't want to be a suburb of Cardiff, we're very happy as we are. I appreciate you've got a hard job to carry out but, you know, with your figures, I think we, the Vale of Glamorgan would sit in nicely within those figures.

I'll just finish off by saying this morning I took my mum, I took my mum, who's 91, she can't drive anymore. Well, we took her car off her because she kept on crashing, none of it was her fault, [laughter] and I took her out. We took her to Barry and we did the usual opticians, Boots the chemist, the bank, and I said look, come on, you've got to go now, I'm, I've got to go to a Boundary Commission review, I'm talking, I've got a 10-minute slot. She said, what's that about? I said, well, they wanna put Dinas Powys in the, in with Cardiff South and Penarth. Oh my God, she said, that'd be awful.

Chair: There we are. Thank you. Just a point of clarification. are you speaking as a private individual or as a elected member? It's just for purposes for when we publish the transcript for redaction?

[01:24:07]

VD: I'm speaking as I'd like to say I'm speaking as a resident of the Community Council of Dinas Powys.

Chair: Okay. Diolch.

VD: I haven't been asked to speak on behalf of the association or the, as a county councillor.

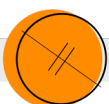
Chair: Diolch. Do my assistant commissioners, any points of clarification?

AC: Nothing from me.

Chair: No? All right. Anything from the audience for points of clarification? No? Thank you, Vincent.

VD: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Okay. Diolch. That concludes this particular session for us. From 4:10 onwards, we've got eight speakers booked in. A number of members of parliament will be joining us and giving evidence then. So I propose that we resume at 10 past four. Diolch.



... have an extra speaker with us today. So we've got Councillor George Carroll who will be contributing to the public hearings. You've got 10 minutes. At the eight-minute mark, you'll get a signal informing you you've got two minutes and then I'll start interrupting you, if that's okay. And then if you remain here after your presentation to open up for questions.

GC: Brilliant. Fantastic. Well, first of all, thank you, Chair, for allowing me the opportunity to speak this afternoon. I make these oral representations in addition to the written representations that I made earlier in the process as part of the consultation. To introduce myself, I am councillor George Carroll, I am a Vale of Glamorgan councillor for the Llandough ward, and I am also the leader of the Conservative Group on the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

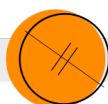
I rise to speak with regard to the Commission's proposals for the Vale of Glamorgan and the Cardiff South and Penarth constituencies. As the Commission will be aware, my own ward of Llandough is located within the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency, and as the group leader for the Conservatives on the Vale of Glamorgan Council, I make representations regarding the Vale of Glamorgan constituency as well.

[01:26:04]

As the Commission will be aware, in the draft proposals, the Dinas Powys ward is set to be removed from the Vale of Glamorgan constituency and transferred to Cardiff South and Penarth. I don't believe that such a proposal would be in the interests of effective and convenient governance, and the Dinas Powys ward, for the reasons outlined by Councillor Vince Driscoll and Andrew RT Davies, better sits within the Vale of Glamorgan. As Councillor Driscoll rightly said, and he can speak better than me as a lifelong resident of Dinas Powys, this community shares far more ties with its neighbouring communities in the Vale of Glamorgan than it does either with the town of Penarth or with the metropolitan city of Cardiff. The services that residents use in Dinas Powys look to Barry and Wenvoe. For example, The Alps Depot is located Wenvoe, and as Councillor Driscoll set out with his mother's experiences earlier today, he uses opticians in Barry, he uses shops in Barry, and I know that most of the residents of Dinas Powys do likewise on that front. I therefore counter propose that the Dinas Powys ward remains within the Vale of Glamorgan constituency.

I also make representations regarding the Rhymney ward which is set to be removed from the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency under the draft proposals. As the Commissioners have already heard from Councillor Andrew RT Davies, this community is better served by sitting within the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency. It has done for many decades. It is very much suburban in nature and better reflects the local ties with the neighbouring wards that are set to remain within that constituency.

Were these counterproposals to be accepted by the Commission, they would fall within the relevant quotas as the Commissioners have already heard the Cardiff South and Penarth constituency by retaining the Rhymney ward and losing the Dinas Powys ward would meet those criteria. Similarly, the Vale of Glamorgan constituency as it currently sits with the Vale of Glamorgan Council wards of Barry,



the town of Barry and then the community wards of Rhoose, St Athan, Llantwit Major, Llandow, Ewenny, St Brides Major, Cowbridge, Wenvoe and Peterston-super-Ely. I think I've gone through them all with Dinas Powys as well, that already fulfils the criteria for the quota. It's the only constituency in Wales on the existing boundaries that does so, and it would be very much a shame were we to lose that. So those are my counterproposals. Happy to take any points of clarification from the Commissioners and once again, Chair, thank you for affording me the opportunity to speak this afternoon. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Any clarifications?

SP: No. Very clear. Thank you.

Chair: Any points of clarification from the front? No? Diolch.

GC: Thank you very much.

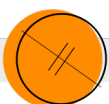
Chair: No problem

[01:29:25]

Chair: Okay. Welcome back. We're ready to kick off our late afternoon, evening session. We've got eight speakers booked for this session and then a break and three more speakers after. What I propose to do is if everyone does turn up early, we'll get through all the speakers and not take the 30-minute break. That way, if people need to leave, etcetera, they can do so. For all the speakers, for this session, you have 10 minutes to present your evidence. At the eight-minute mark, my colleague at the back there, Tom, will show you a two-minute warning. You will then have two minutes to wrap up. If you don't, at the 10-minute mark, I will interrupt you, give you 30 seconds and then that's it. [laughter] When speaking, please introduce yourself, name, the town or area that you're speaking, that you're from, and if you're speaking in your capacity as an elected member or on behalf of a group, etcetera, please make that clear. Following your presentation, please remain at the lectern. We will open up the floor to points of clarification from the Assistant Commissioners as well as members of the audience. So if I could invite Ruth Jones, Member of Parliament of, for Newport West to address us. Diolch.

RJ: Well, thank you very much, and thank you for this opportunity to speak to the panel today. It's great to see you in person and, you know, to be able to communicate in this way. Looking forward to the questions at the end. My name is Ruth Jones. I'm the Member of Parliament for Newport West. And I'm here today speaking on behalf of the Newport West Labour Party. I'm also a lifelong resident of Newport West, so I have a lot of background, if you like, information on, on Newport West. I am new to this Boundary Commission proposals and process but I have very good colleagues who have helped me along and they've helped me understand how the proposals have gone in the past. So I've got their experience to draw on, so I thank them for that.

I need to stress at the beginning that we in Newport West accept the need to reorder and reorganise for each of the Welsh constituencies to fall between the 69,224 and the 77,062 electors. We, we completely accept that. That's not a



problem. Currently, Newport West has 67,040 electors, which is broadly similar to our neighbouring Cardiff constituencies, and we note that the way that they've been dealt with, so all four of the Cardiff constituencies have maybe had one ward tweaked or two at the most. So, you know, they, they've been able to be brought into the, the required numbers by so..., some minimal tweaking.

So with Newport West, we would look to the current, current situation, keeping our current wards, and taking in from Islwyn one or possibly two wards. That would take it up to 71,651 if we took in Risca East, or 75,624 if we took in Newport, Risca East and West. So that's the preferred option from the Newport West Labour Party and obviously, as I say, there is a precedent for that and it's been set within the Cardiff four constituencies. Newport West Labour Party has discussed why that we are against the current configuration, and the number one fundamental is that Newport West and Caerphilly do not relate to each other culturally, communally, logistically, geographically, and there's no local government boundary link. And that's not to say we don't get on very well with our colleagues and friends in Caerphilly but at the same time, the links just aren't there naturally for the communities.

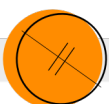
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With the geography, the River Usk runs between Newport East and West, and that's a very, very clear dividing line. It's very, very easy to see where you are, residents in Newport East and West know exactly where they are, so they know whether they're in the east or the west, and they know who to approach in terms of parliamentary boundaries for help. In terms of the Caerphilly boundary and Newport West, there is a gap in population between the Graig ward and the start of the Caerphilly ward, and that's, you know, very rural, agricultural and again, there's no natural link or flow between those two. But there is a natural flow between Islwyn, the lower part of Islwyn and Newport West.

In terms of local government, the new constituency would have two local government centres and this could be really confusing. We'd have the Civic Centre in Newport West and obviously, the Caerphilly County Borough headquarters in Caerphilly. This will also be confusing in terms of the Senedd links and the, whoever the new MP would be would have to be linking with the two members of the Senedd. This could cause confusion.

In terms of the new boundaries, they will cut across houses in the same street. So you'd have people going to different MPs one side of the street compared to the other, or even next door to each other. And whilst Newport West Labour Party accept that the ward is the basic building block, in a heavily built up area like Newport West, wards do cut across back gardens and driveways but it... and that can be managed at the council level but it's more difficult with parliamentary issues. For instance, an immigration case which might require a very urgent appeal to be lodged, could be lost in the confusion of which MP, which Member of Parliament you actually go to talk to and therefore, that could end up with a disastrous outcome for the actual individual concerned.

In terms of community links, Caerphilly looks to Cardiff. There are no, there's no natural affinity with Newport. The geography makes the linkage unnatural whereas



communities in Islwyn and Newport West have a natural affinity. For instance, there's the Risca Leisure Centre in Lower Islwyn which is used a lot by Newport West residents; the Tesco's, Morrison's and the Risca shopping area are used by both sets of residents.

In terms of transport, Caerphilly road and rail links link naturally to Cardiff, Newport road and rail links link to Islwyn. So buses and trains run to and from Islwyn and Newport West, the Ebbw Vale train line runs very smoothly through Newport West and even things like there's a local shopping bus which goes between the supermarkets and, again, that runs at the bottom of, of Islwyn and Newport West very, very smoothly at the moment.

In terms of cultural links, again, there are no cultural links with Caerphilly. In terms of sport, children and young people's football and rugby teams and training, gymnastics, these are all held between Newport West and Risca. And even the church, there are strong links between Rogerstone which is a ward in Newport West and Risca East and West, the two bottom wards in, in Islwyn.

So in summary, Newport West Labour Party is unhappy with the current proposals to create the new constituency, Newport West and Caerphilly. Our preferred option would be to retain all wards and incorporate one or two wards from Islwyn, either Risca East or Risca East and West. There is a natural link, and this follows the precedent set in the Cardiff constituencies and will maintain the local government boundaries, the Senedd links, transport and cultural links and respects community links and the geography of the area. So I want to say thank you for your time and for listening. I'm happy to take questions.

[01:37:00]

Chair: Diolch. Any of my assistant commissioners? Steve, can I invite you to start off?

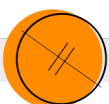
SP: Yes, than, thank you, and I think you were very clear about your preference and the options there, particularly in the Risca area. But would it be fair to say that in the context of the triangle that we're looking at, which is Caerphilly, Newport West and Islwyn, that you believe that Islwyn – at least the southern part of it - provides a greater affinity with your existing constituency link Caerphilly?

RJ: Absolutely. In terms of, of, you're spot on there. What, in terms of the road and rail links, the north, south is to Islwyn. It's not to, to the northwest of Caerphilly.

SP: Okay. Thank you.

Chair: Okay, anything from my, anything?

AC: Perhaps more, perhaps to ask, I know you've spoken about Newport West in particular, obviously, because you're the MP there, do you have any observations about what the impact on Caerphilly would be? Or have you any thoughts about what to do with Caerphilly then?



RJ: I mean, obviously Caerphilly's a very important area and I wouldn't want to, you know, be talking out of place with Caerphilly. I think we were very clear that we are very nearly at the threshold of the electorate.

AC: Okay.

RJ: So, it was just a question of taking one or possibly two wards, as the Cardiff constituents have done. And we, we wouldn't want to presume on Caerphilly, you know, to tell Caerphilly people what we think should be happening there.

AC: Okay.

Chair: Trying to start a riot, Ruth?

RJ: Absolutely. No riots in Caerphilly or Newport West, thank you.

Chair: Are there any points of clarification from the audience? If not, diolch, thank you for giving us your time today. I will ask my colleague to sanitise the lectern and then I'll invite Joe Stevens MP to address us. Diolch.

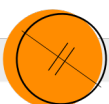
Our next speaker will be Member of Parliament, Jo Stevens.

[01:39:12]

JS: Prynhawn da. Good afternoon Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners. My name is Jo Stevens. I'm the Welsh Labour Member of Parliament for Cardiff Central and it's a real pleasure to welcome you all and everybody here to Cardiff Central today. My submission this afternoon relates to the Commission's initial proposals for Cardiff Central and the three adjoining Cardiff seats; Cardiff West, Cardiff North and Cardiff South and Penarth. And can I start by saying that the Commission has been tasked with a very difficult exercise under the terms of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020. I think that any review that requires implementation of the electoral quota framework as at December 2020 during the height of the pandemic and a reduction of eight parliamentary seats from the existing 40 seats is probably the equivalent of being given a 60 seconds to do a Rubik's Cube puzzle. [laughter] So I want to express my appreciation for the detailed work that has gone into these proposals.

I do want to place on record my concern that the requirement on the Commission disproportionately and negatively impacts constituencies with a high concentration of young people, of students, of migrant communities and disadvantaged communities, who are all groups who are less likely to be on the electoral register. An equalisation of constituencies should, in my view, be based upon overall adult population, not just those on the electoral register. But with those caveats however, I welcome the initial proposals for the constituency of Cardiff Central, and I say that both as the current Member of Parliament but also as a resident of Cardiff Central.

The next door constituency of Cardiff South and Penarth is currently oversized whilst Cardiff Central constituency is undersized, and the Commission is right to recognise areas with existing community links within Cardiff Central; so Cathays



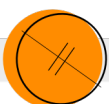
and Plasnewydd, Plasnewydd and Penylan, Penylan and Cyncoed, and Llanedeyrn and Pentwyn. And many residents of Penylan, Plasnewydd and parts of Cyncoed consider themselves to be part of the Roath community and the placename, Roath, is very well-established and understood. It's seen on our, on names of our schools, on our landmark geographical features such as Roath Park and Roath Park Lake, both of which are geographically in the Cyncoed ward, and Roath Recreation Ground, the Rec, which is in the Penylan ward.

[01:41:46]

The typically large electorates of wards in Cardiff do reduce the number of options available to the Commission and as such, the logical extension of the Cardiff, sorry, of the current Cardiff Central constituency with the addition of Rymney and Llanrhyney wards is welcomed. Llanrhyney and Rhymney are both wards with very good and well-established transport links, both road and public transport, to the existing Cardiff Central constituency. Newport Road is the main road from Llanrhyney through Rhymney, through both Penylan and Adamsdown and into Cathays, and the Commission, again, is right to recognise areas with existing community links, namely Pentwyn and Llanrhyney, and Llanrhyney and Rhymney. Rhymney and Llanrhyney are wards with very longstanding and extensive local ties to each other, they are seen and felt as part of the same community. And I note that there has been a counterproposal moving these two wards into two different constituencies, Rhymney back into Cardiff South and Penarth and Llanrhyney moving into Cardiff North. This proposal - this counterproposal - ignores the significant local ties between the wards of Rhymney and Llanrhyney. The school catchment areas for Llanrhyney and Rhymney are interlinked at Eastern High School, transport links are extremely limited between Llanrhyney and Pontprennau and Old St Mellons, which the counterproposal would move Llanrhyney into Cardiff North. Rule Five in Schedule Two of the act specifies a number of factors that the Commission may take into account. Any local ties that would be broken is a specific factor that can be taken into account and as such, I do not support this counterproposal as it runs contrary to Rule Five Schedule Two.

Other counterproposals have been put forward. I think the Conservative proposal relates to the Riverside ward and the Llandaff North ward. The counterproposal to move Riverside into Cardiff Central fails to take into account the special geographical considerations of the city. Riverside is completely separated from the remainder of Cardiff Central by the River Taf and in addition, the Llandaff North ward is separated from the remainder of the Cardiff West constituency by the River Taf, again failing to take into account that special geographical consideration. The counterproposal involves a total of three electoral wards within Cardiff moving from their current constituencies, compared to the two wards affected by the Commission's initial proposals.

The Liberal Democrats counterproposal involves moving a significantly higher number of wards between existing constituencies in Cardiff. This counterproposal, which returns Rhymney and Llanrhyney to Cardiff South and adds Gabalfa and the Heath to Cardiff Central again fails to take into account the strong local ties that exist. The Gabalfa ward is very closely linked into the Llandaff North ward. Indeed, the Gabalfa estate straddles both of those wards. And the Llandaff North



links with Gabalfa are not, sorry, are not with Llandaff, they are with Gabalfa. So I was a resident of Llandaff for nearly two decades and Llandaff is very closely connected to Canton and, particularly, the Pontcanna area of Canton rather than being linked via community ties with Llandaff North. The Gabalfa roundabout brings together the communities of Whitchurch and Gabalfa. The Heath ward is closely tied into Llanishen and Whitchurch, and these communities are linked not just by transport links but also by school catchment areas.

And I note that both the Conservative and the Liberal Democrat, crat councner, sorry, counterproposals move Rhymney and Llanrhymney into two separate constituencies. And having mentioned the very close community ties between those two constituencies, I will provide a more detailed response to those in the written submission that I will file with the Commission after today.

So I don't support any of the counterproposals, and I would submit that they should be rejected. The Commission's proposals for the four parliamentary constituencies in Cardiff meet both the electoral quota as defined by the Act, but are also the least disruptive proposals based both on the statutory factors and special geographical considerations within the Act. And finally, thank you very much for the opportunity to make my submission today.

Chair: Thank you. ACs, any points of clarification?

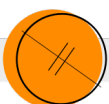
[01:46:25]

SP: Yeah. Thanks for that. You were very clear about virtually all of the wards in and around your existing constituency. I think part of our issue is going to be the arithmetic, inevitably, and I hear what you say about the counterproposals but just to complete the picture, are there any parts of your constituency, for example, Cyncoed, one could argue that that could easily be part of Cardiff North, and one could argue, I think you've rejected it, but you could argue that the Heath could come into Cardiff Central. I'm not advocating those as options but we might inevitably be faced with some difficult arithmetic somewhere if number of representations have been received - not so much about Cardiff Central but about other parts of Cardiff - which identify imperfections, serious imperfections, from local perspective. So is, is there any sort of give, do you think, in the analysis that you've outlined?

JS: Well, first of all, I would say overall, I think that the Commission in terms of its initial proposals has done a very good job in terms of the four constituencies and keeping things intact as far as possible. They're not, you know, the size of the wards are, are difficult to work with.

On the Cyncoed point, I would go back to the point I made in my submission, which is about the community of Roath, essentially, which is Penylan, Plasnewydd and Cyncoed, and separating that away into Cardiff North, I don't think, would work because of those close community ties.

On the Heath issue, I'll go back to what I said which is that Heath is very much part of Llanishen and Whitchurch community, particularly the school catchment areas are Llanishen and Whitchurch and so separating and creating a kind of fissure



between that, I don't think, would work and, and would affect community ties. So I, I don't envy the job that the Commission has, but I do think in terms of the four constituencies for Cardiff and the density of the population that you're working with, the current proposals are very good proposals and I support them. Thank you.

SP: Thank you.

JA: Thank you.

Chair: Andrew?

AC: I just, could you expand on why the River Taf is going to be such a barrier if, if Riverside was to be transferred?

JS: Well, it is a natural geographical factor and is one that the Commission has taken into account, and previous Commissions have taken into account, and Riverside is very much part of the community of Cardiff West. I listened to earlier submissions about this urban core, I think it was described as, and Riverside and Cathays. But there is a very clear, the river provides a very clear line and a distinct line between the two communities, and the railway line does it to the south, the A48 does it to the north. And I, you know, there is not a kind of community tie between Riverside and constituencies on the other side of the Taf. There is a very close community tie between Riverside and the adjoining wards on the western side of the Taf.

AC: Thank you.

[01:49:47]

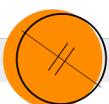
JS: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Do we have...? No? Are there any points of clarification from...? No?

Can I just ask you to introduce yourself again for the purpose of the recording?
Thank you.

PR: Pete Roberts, Welsh Liberal Democrats. You stated a few minutes ago that the Taf was a natural geographic factor. It has been picked up on already today, there is no physical link, other than going below the high watermark between the wards of Trowbridge and Splott in the Commission's proposals. So how would you reconcile that anomaly, which actually is specifically mentioned that detached parts should be avoided? How would you reconcile that with your proposals, which don't actually touch on that? Because they link Llanrhymney and Rhymney together in a Cardiff Central ward and retain that anomaly.

JS: Thank you for the question. The Trowbridge situation is not an ideal situation, I accept that. But there isn't a better solution that meets all of the criteria in Rule Five Schedule Two. I mean, it's as simple as that. So, you know, we can try and seek perfection, but we will not achieve perfection. And it's about achieving as much of that perfection as you can. As I say, you know, it's not ideal, but as far as I can see, there is no better solution that meets all of the criteria in the statute.



Chair: Yeah. Any more questions? No? Thank you, Jo.

JS: Thank you very much indeed.

SP: Thank you.

AC: Thank you.

Chair: Can you just give me a minute? I'm gonna check who else is here and... I'm just gonna double check in terms of who's here.

Right, could I invite our next contributor, which is Chris Evans, Member of Parliament for Islwyn? Chris, you have 10 minutes. At the eight-minute mark, my colleague at the back there will give you a two-minute warning. At the 10-minute mark, I'll tell you've got 30 seconds to wrap up.

CEv: I don't think I'll take that long.

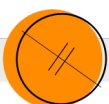
Chair: [laughs] Okay, go ahead.

CEv: My name is Christopher Evans. I'm the Member of Parliament for Islwyn and I have been since 2010. I speak today in favour of the Boundary Commission's initial proposals, which would see Islwyn remaining largely intact with the addition of further wards from within the Caerphilly County Borough.

[01:53:00]

The proposals, proposals acknowledge the geographical links within our valley and has gained unanimous support within Islwyn constituency Labour Party. The addition of Ystrad Mynach, St Catwg, Llanbradach and Hengoed to Islwyn would be appropriate given the shared communities within the area. Hengoed and Maescymer are linked by the viaduct flowing to Ystrad Mynach and Llanbradach while St Catwg's borders Pengam. These communities are therefore a natural addition to the constituency of Islwyn. Many from, many from the new wards are likely to already visit Islwyn on a regular basis due to the shopping facilities in Blackwood town centre and will have family and friend links there as well. There are also strong transport links between all communities within, with many from the Islwyn area already using the train line in Ystrad Mynach and Hengoed to visit Cardiff. The 151 bus route connects the constituency from Risca to Blackwood, passing through Abercarn, Crosskeys and Newbridge.

A counterproposal's been suggested which would amend the proposed Newport West and Caerphilly constituency, so included in part of the Islwyn seat rather than the town of Caerphilly. This would involve taking Blackwood, Cefn Fforest, Maescwmmmer and Pengam from Islwyn creating a Caerphilly seat and a so called Newport West Newbridge from the rest of the existing Islwyn constituency. To divide, to divide Newbridge from Blackwood and Pontllanffraith makes no sense. The A472 runs from Newbridge through Pontllanffraith to Ystrad, showing the clear connections between the area. There is ultimately no link between Newbridge and Newport which can compare to the links within the current Islwyn boundaries proposed by the review. In transport terms, there is no train link between Islwyn



and Newport. The area of Pontllanffraith, Newbridge and Blackwood are inextricably connected with shared families and communities. As it's Six Nations season at the moment, when Blackwood and Newbridge play each other, it is often considered as a local derby.

School catchment areas also provide an insight to the clear logic of the boundary reviews proposals for the Islwyn constituency. As Islwyn currently stands, no Islwyn primary school feeds into secondary schools outside of the constituency. The catchment area for the new Islwyn High is based in Oakdale and includes schools from Pontllanffraith. All the secondary schools, Blackwood, Islwyn High, Newbridge, Risca and Ysgol Cwm Rhymni all feed into one further education college, Coleg Gwent, again based in the Islwyn constituency in Crosskeys.

Historically, the wards of Blackwood, Cefn Fforest and Pengam were part of the old Islwyn Borough Council. All three wards have a distinctive Islwyn identity and little affinity with Caerphilly. It is a historic seat previously represented by, by Neil Kinnock, the former leader of the party and has a real constituency identity. And as I said, does have widespread, these proposals have widespread support within the constituency. Thank you.

Chair: Diolch. Assistant commissioners, any points of clarification? Anything?

CE: Done a great job. [laughter] I could have just said that, couldn't I, in one sentence?

[01:56:12]

Chair: Just for the record, this had nothing to do with them.

CEv: [laughs]

Chair: It was, it's actually the commissioners, they're indepent. [laughs]

CEv: The Commission's done a great job then.

Chair: I'll take that. As secretary, I'll take that. There we are. I'll take that for the team.

AC: We'll take that.

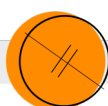
Chair: [laughs] Are there any points of clarification from the audience? If there isn't, diolch-.

CEv: Diolch, thank you very much.

Chair: Thank you for your time, Chris.

Can I invite our next contributor Nick Thomas-Symonds, the Member of Parliament for Torfaen.

NTS: Well, thank you very much for the opportunity to give evidence and indeed for having me on a little bit earlier this afternoon, which is greatly appreciated. As you say, I'm Nick Thomas-Symonds, the Member of Parliament for Torfaen and I'm here to speak in favour of the Boundary Commission's initial proposals. I support very



much this proposal for the Torfaen parliamentary constituency that consists of 100% of the existing seat, plus those remaining wards that are currently within the Torfaen County Borough Council area but are in the Monmouth parliamentary constituency. Now, my position on this is also the position of the Welsh Labour Party, it's the position of the Torfaen Constituency Labour Party, and indeed it is also supported by Labour local government colleagues in Torfaen as well. And I set out why I take this view using the criteria that the Boundary Commission has set out for its considerations.

Firstly, special geographic considerations. Physical geography supports this proposal with the Afon Lwyd river running through the constituency from its source north of Blaenavon, down to Cwmbran before joining the River Usk.

Local government boundaries, and I think this is an absolutely critical factor as far as I am concerned, the existing proposal corrects the anomaly that I have described because it ends the situation of wards within the Torfaen local authority area being in the Monmouth parliamentary constituency. And I can confirm, as the local MP since May 2015, that the existing situation has frequently caused confusion, people contacting my office on issues of policy and casework that then had to be redirected to the Member of Parliament for Monmouth. Having, in my view, the local authority and the parliamentary constituency as coterminous makes sense both in terms of the criteria that have been set out for the Boundary Commission but also, for the wider purposes of democracy and clarity that the administrative units are the same.

[01:59:23]

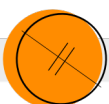
Boundaries of the existing constituencies. Well, the proposals keep the existing constituency intact. It is a, a historic constituency that whilst it was created with its current name in 1983, it was existing with virtually unchanged boundaries back to the end of World War One in its former name of Pontypool, and continuing that constituency, that identity is very important.

And that brings me to the point about local ties. I've already referred to the importance of the local authority and the parliamentary constituency being coterminous, and that does reflect very deep historical ties that are cultural and that are socio-economic.

Could I just deal as well with a counterproposal to cut up the Torfaen parliamentary constituency? Frankly, on the criteria that have been used by the Boundary Commission to look at this, I cannot see how slicing up the Torfaen parliamentary constituency is consistent at all with these criteria. Indeed, in my view, it would be inimicable to these criteria to actually slice up and separate the Torfaen parliamentary constituency.

So I support very much the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission. I'm very grateful for the work and the ongoing work that is being done and I'm, of course, available to answer any questions.

Chair: There we are. Any points of clarification from the audience? No? Thank you for your time.



NTS: Thank you very much.

Chair: Diolch. Okay. Let me just....

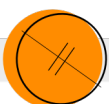
I'm going to slightly alter, alter the order of the proceedings as we've got some of our speakers here already, contributors already here. So I think it's worthwhile, with the weather getting worse [laughs], to call, to call you guys up as soon as possible. Can I invite before I invite you up, for the new set of speakers, everyone's has been allocated a 10-minute speaking slot. At the eight-minute slot, you will be given a two-minute warning by my colleague who's sitting behind you with a little, he'll have little sign telling you you've got two minutes. At a 10-minute mark, I'll interrupt and you have 30 seconds to wrap up before being asked to stop speaking for, and please remain at the lectern after you've finished your contributions to enable the Assistant Commissioners and members of the audience to ask points of clarification. So if I could invite our first speaker, John Child? Diolch.

[02:02:51]

JC: Good evening, all. My name is John Child and I certainly won't be speaking for eight minutes. [laughter] I'll try and make this as short as I could like to say but I've lived in Caerphilly for the last 75 years, which is pretty well all of my life. Very attached to Caerphilly. My parents, my father was a geologist, we're very involved with the golf club, very involved with the British Legion, my wife's a member of the Red Cross We're very involved in the community in Caerphilly, particularly with the church, St Martin's Church. I've looked at the proposals and I definitely support them. I think that Caerphilly, it is sad to say that most of the, Caerphilly is the capital of our country and I think that most of the financial support that has come into Caerphilly has been spent to the north of Caerphilly in terms of Bargoed and other areas which have not contributed to, Caerphilly Castle, the tourism in Caerphilly itself. I worked in Newport for five, at least six years. I was articled, I'm a chartered accountant, I was articled Newport for five years, passed my exams, I stayed in Newport. The links to Newport are excellent. I travelled on a bus. I'm going back in the early 60s when the bus fare then was three and nine, [laughter] which now equates about 70 and a half pence. The links to Newport are good, we are, the hospitals in Newport are excellent. We've had a new hospital in Ystrad Mynach, but I think the majority of the connections are to the hospital. We are part of that, I can't remember the name of it now, the trust that is set up in Newport. Just make a few other notes here. The business links I think we want to go sideways to Newport. We are very near Cardiff. Caerphilly is very, very near Cardiff and I thought we may have gone in with Cardiff North to be a part of a bigger city, but I think that Newport. Newport itself is a city and I think we, we need to communicate with, with Newport that more will happen in business development. So I certainly support the proposal. That's all I'm gonna say this evening. Thank you very much.

Chair: Thank you, anything from my ACs?

AC: Just one briefly. You very eloquently described the business connections and links in terms of the two. In terms of any cultural affinity that you might feel being from Caerphilly, do, do you see a cultural connection?



JC: Possibly. I mean, we're not very Welsh speaking, sadly, in Caerphilly or Newport. I used to speak Welsh when I was younger but sadly, I've lost all that. Cultural connections, there are certainly some. The choirs and communications like that. We have a choir, Caerphilly Choir. I, I was very involved in Newport Cathedral. I was the chairman of the fundraising in Newport Cathedral, when we raised a million pounds to put a new roof on Newport Cathedral. So I've had a lot of involvements with Newport myself. I've travelled to Newport a lot, I was very involved in Newport Cathedral in getting a million pound, I was the chairman of that committee there.

AC: No, thank you. No, thank you.

JC: Thank you.

Chair: Are there any points of clarification from the audience? No?

SP: No.

JC: Thank you. Thank you.

Chair: Okay. Could I invite Steven Mayfield next, please?

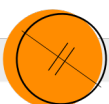
[02:06:47]

Chair: Here we are.

SM: Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Steven Mayfield. I'm here to support the recommendations in the report as seen. Whereas John spoke about living in Caerphilly for the last 70-odd years, I'm relatively new to Caerphilly. I've lived there for four years, but I was a candidate in the last Senedd election, so within that sort of parliamentary constituency. So I wanted to talk about how I saw it as being a candidate and how I saw some of the, the splits between communities in the existing setup that we've got, and how I think it will be improved in the new setup.

I saw, as I say, I saw when I was out campaigning, particularly when we moved through Ystrad Mynach and up through Hengoed, I'd be talking to my neighbouring candidates up there to make sure we weren't leafletting the same areas, that there were streets where it was very close between a neighbouring constituency and my constituency, which, you know, leafletting is one thing. When we moved on to Facebook advertising, we were seeing my constituents getting neighbouring constituencies, Facebook adverts, etcetera because it was the, it was almost at the boundary. Although it followed the river, we have people on both sides of the river, so one constituent was on one side of the river, mine on another. With the existing, oh and also, I suppose, well, as Caerphilly in its existing setup is an L shape, you know, we did find that places like Machen and Lower Machen were split in the existing setup.

In the new proposal, I think there's a much clearer boundary between communities and between neighbouring constituencies. So as it stands now, it's almost as if the



hills and the valley shape itself, where there are no real communities and the big population centres, they now seem to mark the boundaries with the Caerphilly area, so we don't get that split where one street's on one, in one constituency and one's in the other. The links, so we're now bringing together Machen and Lower Machen, for example.

The road links are very good. As I mentioned, Caerphilly in its existing setup is an L shape. The bottom of the L shape runs down to, to, down to Newport. The road links are very good, it's a natural road link down there from Caerphilly down to Newport, it's a very well used road link and the communities along that, you know, are all passing down, down to Newport, down to the M4. So there's a natural, natural flow down the valley down towards Newport. Similarly, you know, you have got the road link but that means you've also got a very good bus link. There's a very good bus link that runs a regular service along that route and up from Newport up to Caerphilly, etcetera.

So I think that's where I've seen the main, the main benefits. I don't think we're necessarily in this current setup, particularly around the Caerphilly Bedwas area, we're not splitting those communities, which I felt we were doing in the existing boundaries. I think this is an awful lot better for those reasons.

[02:09:39]

But that's really all I wanted to say in terms of where I see the support. So as I say, I do support these changes and I think they will make some strong benefits and make it easier for the constituents to understand where exactly they are in terms of constituencies.

Chair: Diolch. Thank you.

SM: Happy to take any clarification.

Chair: There we are.

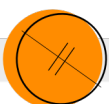
SM: Fantastic.

Chair: Any points of clarification from the audience? No. Thank you.

SM: Fantastic. Thank you very much.

Chair: Could I please invite Judith Child to the lectern? Diolch

JudithC: Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to be here and I definitely support Caerphilly being part of Newport East, West. [laughs] That's a good start, isn't it? [laughs] I too have lived in Caerphilly for 75 years and I've been actively involved in lots of charities. I became a magistrate in 1985, when we were then the old Mid Glamorgan. And, of course, Mid Glamorgan had been part of Gwent for quite some time so I would have thought it is a natural progression for Caerphilly to be part of Gwent, having seen it work very successfully with the judiciary.



I also had been appointed a High Sheriff in 2008 and again, you know, I was very involved with lots of the counties and Caerphilly definitely seemed far better to be involved with Newport than to be involved with Cardiff or to go anywhere else. I think the links with the hospital, again, I've been involved with the British Red Cross for many years, no longer because we were taken over by Cardiff and then in Cardiff, we became part of Gwent. And as a result of that, I sat on the Trust Board in the Royal Gwent for a number of years as a representative, again, of Mid Glamorgan to sort of try and engage as to how a layperson would see their, their parents, or their aunts, or their uncles going into hospital and being treated, you know, that, in a safe and sort of happy, I can't think of the word, senior moment, condition because I think when you're a professional and sitting on a health board, you look at things very differently than when you're a layperson. You know, I would be very keen to make sure hospital bedside cabinets are clean and wheels on trolleys are clean, where you wouldn't expect, you know, your medics to look at things like that. But, I'm, you know, I'm being side-lined a bit. But I think that definitely, Caerphilly would be better off with Newport because as I say, the hospitals, the schools, I mean, I went to school in Newport, I went to the Convent of St Joseph's as it was in those days, the links between Caerphilly with a bus route was excellent. We don't have a train service anymore, but we used to many, many years ago. So I think it's, it's definitely the thing to do is for us to become part of Newport West. Thank you.

Chair: Diolch. Points of clarification?

[02:13:28]

AC: No.

Chair: There we are. Anything from the audience for points of clarification? No? Thank you.

JudithC: Thank you very much. Thank you.

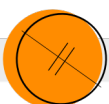
SP: Thank you.

Chair: There we are. Could I invite Clive Evans, please for, to the lectern. Diolch.

ClEv: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Clive Evans and my presentation will be the shortest you've heard today, I can guarantee it [laughter]. For the first three years of our married life we lived in Nelson, which was a lovely little village. Always been the happiest place to live for the three years we were there, we enjoyed ourselves and I think it should be linked back with Ystrad Mynach and with the council wards to Caerphilly because the proximity is very, very close and it always has been. I don't see any reason why it should be moving into Islwyn.

For the past 54 years, I've lived in Caerphilly and fully endorse what our, my friends and colleagues have said and would support the plans for the changes as proposed for Caerphilly going with Newport West. I'm sure it will be beneficial for Caerphilly and for Newport West as well. And that's me done.

AC: Thank you.



Chair: There we are. One second, one second. Any points for clarification? [laughter]

AC: No.

Chair: And I'm assuming there's none from the audience? Thank you so much. [laughter]
We do have a few minutes before our next speaker, so if anybody needs to take a comfort break, I think now's the time to do it. If I invite everyone back at five?

Unknown male: David on at five.

Chair: Yeah, he's on at five. Yes. Yeah. Diolch.

Okay, well come back. Best laid plans to try and squeeze everyone in before break-
[inaudible - 2:15:42] are you okay to start? Our next speaker is a Member of Parliament for Monmouth, David Davies. David, can I invite you up to address us? You've got 10 minutes.

DD: Thank you.

Chair: At the eight-minute mark, my colleague will give you a signal that you've got two minutes left.

DD: Can I take this?

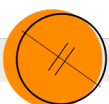
[02:15:59]

Chair: Yes, please. And at the 10-minute mark, I'll interrupt you and give you 30 seconds to wrap up.

DD: Thank you. Well, I have some news for you, ma'am, which may or may not be good news and that is that my office have actually failed to find a way of sending over my submission in a form that I can read. So I'll be winging this a bit and, therefore, might well take less than the eight minutes.

But I'd like to say that, this may be unusual, but I'm actually here to come along and support the Boundary Commission's proposals in full. And there are two major reasons for this. The first is the easy one, is the name. I've represented the Monmouth constituency as the assembly member since '99 to 2007, and as the Member of Parliament from 2005 until, until currently. Now the, the name of the constituency is the Monmouth constituency but of course, at the moment, it covers a much wider area than the town of Monmouth, Abergavenny, Chepstow, Gilwern, into the Valleys, even up to Llanelly Hill and then down into Torfaen, but which I'll, I'll say more in a moment.

But clearly, there are, there are two issues with this. The first is it causes confusion. People in Abergavenny Chepstow, etcetera, don't understand why they're being represented by somebody apparently who's the MP or assembly member, MS now, now for the town of Monmouth. When they found out, I, I sense a slight irritation that some people sort of feel, well why is, why is the constituency named after this particular town, not my town, or anywhere else? And, and, and so, you



know, between irritation and confusion are not things, emotions, that we want to see in the electorate.

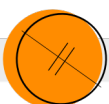
Now, I have to admit that I and others have been tempted to describe ourselves as the Member of Parliament for, member of the Senedd for Monmouthshire but, of course, that would not be true either because although the constituency covers most of the Monmouthshire County, it doesn't cover all of it. Then I see the Member of Parliament for parts of Monmouthshire has just walked in. But it does, of course, include parts of Torfaen at the moment. So, so the situation around the name change is, is excellent. If it becomes the, the Monmouthshire constituency, that will mean something to everyone who lives in Monmouthshire.

[02:18:03]

And, of course, it would under the proposals, this is the second part of it, be the full Monmouthshire constituency because over the years, I think another source of confusion has been the fact that constituents living in the Magor and the Caldicot end of the constituency will write to me, sometimes about a local authority issue assuming that I'm the MP, or that as the MP for Monmouth I'll be the person that sorts it out. But, of course, it wouldn't be me, it would be the Member of Parliament for, for Newport East because we will always represent the person who lives, that we will always take the address as being the decisio..., deciding factor in determining whether or not to take up a case or not. Similarly, a lot of people who write to Nick Thomas-Symonds, the MP for Torfaen, living in the Ponthir Llanfrechfa area expect him to take up their cases and be surprised to find that it's actually the Member of Parliament for Monmouth who represents them.

I suppose we could overcome the confusion and we, we all get by, and luckily, the three of us have a very good working relationship and we'll always pass on constituency cases to the appropriate person, but I think a measure of clarity is something that, that, that we would all welcome. And it would give another advantage as well, because we all, I believe, work hard to try and build up relationships with the appropriate people in our constituencies, and, and that would include the cabinet members and the senior leading local authority officers for, for, you know, for, for all matters; for education, health, social services and so on. But at the moment, we're having to do that with, with different local authorities who may have different priorities in different areas. It would be easier, much easier, and I think, enable better representation if the Member of Parliament, Member of, Mem, Member of Parliament is able to concentrate on building relationships with one set of stakeholders in one local authority, and I think that would deliver clarity as well.

So I have seen proposals which involve specifically, in Monmouthshire, splitting up the local authority area or spreading the constituency out over various areas. I absolutely reject those proposals. I think people feel an affinity towards the county of Monmouthshire, those who live in there. And indeed, there was a battle, I think, some 20 years ago to ensure that the name of Monmouthshire stuck around in some form or another. So really, Madam, Madam Chairman, I'm here to say that I fully support the proposals. I think they will bring clarity, they will bring more effective scrutiny, they will, they will please people who live in the area, and I will put on record the fact that I would personally be very sorry to lose the ability to represent people in Torfaen, in Llanfrechfa and Ponthir, but I understand the logic



behind the proposals that the Boundary Commission have put forward and I fully support them. And I'm happy to answer any questions if there are any.

Chair: Any points of clarification?

SP: Yeah, just one. It's more of a confirmation than a question, but there have been various counterproposals tabled in relation to Monmouthshire. I assume you see no merit in them?

DD: That's correct, sir. Was that the question, sir? Yes, that is absolutely correct. But I believe that the members of, the other members of parliament who are affected by this for Torfaen and, and Newport East are supportive of the proposals put forward by the Boundary Commission, presumably for similar reasons. And I would certainly reject the idea of splitting up the local authority and the constituency in some way, yes sir.

SP: Helpful, thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Are there any points of clarification from anyone in the audience? No? Well, David, diolch for your time.

DD: Diolch yn fawr, thank you.

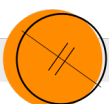
[02:21:44]

Chair: Didn't leave your wallet, like someone else? [laughs]

DD: Sorry, I left my mask.

Chair: No, no. [laughs] Andrew RT Davies left his mask as well, so... [laughs]. Obviously this wasn't planned, but it's worked out beautifully. [laughter] Can I invite Jessica Morden, the Member of Parliament for Newport East to make her contribution? That's perfectly fine, yeah. So Jessica, you've got 10 minutes. At the eight-minute mark, my colleague, Tom will give you a two-minute warning. At the 10-minute mark, I will interrupt you and you have 30 seconds to wrap up.

JM: Okay. I don't think I'll get to 10 minutes but thank you very much and thanks for taking me early. And like my colleague, really, I just wanted to say initially, I'm Jessica Morden, I'm the MP for Newport East, just wanted to say initially that I support the Boundary Commission's initial proposals as they are and I wanted to, to talk a little bit following on from my colleagues just then about the Monmouthshire end and the, obviously the Newport East seat as well, and, and I would say, with quite a heavy heart really because alongside John Griffiths the assembly member, I've represented new appointees for a long time and the, the proposal obviously splits the constituency, and that's very hard when you're very passionate about all the communities, I think, in that constituency. But I do appreciate the criteria that you've been given in order to calculate new constituencies and the legislation you've been given to make the boundaries work and the criteria you've been given to work within and because of that, I acknowledge that the movement of the Newport East constituency but Monmouthshire Council wards into a new Monmouthshire is very logical and would meet the criteria that you have to follow in terms of respecting local



government boundaries. And I do appreciate that that makes Monmouthshire as a local authority and a constituency coterminous, which I can see, certainly see the logic of, and having grown up in Torfaen, but in the Monmouthshire constituency part of Torfaen and Llanfrechfa, I also appreciate that, you know, change really of those communities of Llanyrafon, Croesyceiliog and Croesycc..., going into Torfaen to make Torfaen coterminous. So I can see the attraction. There must be few places across Wales like Monmouthshire and Torfaen where the electorates would fit a constituency in, in the local authority form. So I understand that as well. And, you know, I do acknowledge there are strong political feelings on this as well in parts of Severnside in Newport East, but I know that's clearly not a consideration for the Boundary Commission, but I do acknowledge that too.

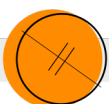
The, with coming to the Newport East initial proposals, I see strong arguments for this approach by combining the eight Newport East wards with the six Newport West wards into a, into a constituency, and you point is to make an electorate of around 76,000, which is at the upper end of the electoral range, I know. They would all be wards within Newport Council area, so it would respect local government boundaries, ward boundaries.

[02:25:09]

In the written, so I think this comes out in the written submissions as well, having represented Newport East for a number of years, I know that there are strong links, and, and it's come out in some of the evidence you've received from the public, between the communities of Pill and Stow Hill and Victoria, for instance, and they, they, you know, there is, there are a lot of connections and close community ties there. There are a number of public sector and voluntary agencies that work across those wards already and, you know, I think that came out in the submissions as did issues to do with the diversity and the, the makeup of those communities too. Their, those kind of city centre wards are part of the Newport Council Central Community Hub area. They're also part of the Newport central policing area. The Newport centre, Newport Council City Master Plan includes the Newport East Riverside area and Stow Hill and Shaftsbury and, and those areas, and I acknowledge that people who live in the new developments in Newport East on the river kind of work, shop, you know, use the leisure facilities in, over the footbridge. We have many bridges in Newport [laughs], over the footbridge in Newport West, and also, many people from Newport West come across for the rugby, for the football. You know, there, it's, it's a very, it's, people cross those boundaries, cross the river a lot really.

The communities that I represent currently in main do use the mosques in Pill and in Stow Hill and many in the communities in Pill will come across to the mosques on a Friday in Newport East too. And those were the kind of examples I would use to, to explain really the, the kind of common area there that we have.

Moving to, currently in Newport East is the ward of St Julian's, which has very close links with Caerleon. In fact, it switched to Newport West which, in fact, to travel through the city, we use Caerleon road going through the Newport East constituency rather, I would say, rather than the lane that would take you through the Newport West way. So there's a very strong transport link there. And there's always been a bit of a strange boundary because obviously, Caerleon ward spans



the river and so is on both sides of the river, and the, for instance, the Celtic Manor and the community of Christchurch border very closely to Newport east. In fact, they are very close to the main arterial road of Chepstow Road. So it's often been quite strange for people to appreciate they're actually in Newport West, not in Newport East where they're on that area. And again, wards like Langston look very much to Newport rather than to Monmouthshire, and the wards of, of Newport East ward of Langston, which contains Llanwern Steelworks, the CAF railway factory, etcetera, they were, look, are very much part of the city master plan really, and those communities. And the new developments on the old steelwork sites of Glan Llyn, for instance, are a very key part of the Newport Master Plan and growth of Newport, and those kind of housing developments.

[02:28:21]

I think the transport work links, links work too, particularly for communities like Malpas and, and, and, as I've mentioned, the link between Caerleon and St Julian's. And I just think, given the criteria that you've got to work with, which is obviously, you know, the statutory electoral range, which is tough, you know, we're getting bigger constituencies, given local ties, given geography, given local auth..., the want, the need to kind of keep local authority ward boundaries as much as possible, and where possible, make coterminous constituencies, I think these proposals work. I think, by and large, the submissions kind of reflect that, certainly for the Newport East seat. And I think on the, on the Monmouthshire side, I, it was, it was interesting to see that all, there was a cross party approach in Monmouthshire Council signed by all the, the leaders of each of the groups to say that they thought that it made sense to make those changes there, given that we have to have bigger constituencies and therefore, we do have to have changes and can't remain the same. And I'll probably leave it at that, if that's okay?

Chair: Thank you. Are there any points of clarification? Steven?

SP: Yes, one point which I think you, you've alluded to already, but you have a couple of wards, or more than a couple, notably Pill which have significant ethnic minority communities. Have they commented to you on the wisdom or otherwise of these proposals?

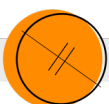
JM: I think some of the community groups have informally work with us, work with all, you know, elected representatives because the, some of the issues, for instance, in Maindy and Pill, are very similar, and similar and some of the communities are. So, and, and that's certainly been reflected, I feel.

SP: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Are there any points of clarification from the audience? No? Diolch, Jessica. Thank you for your time.

JM: Thank you very much.

Chair: We do have one last speaker that's booked in for 6:20pm [laughs]. I'll, what I suggest is, we take a break. If there's, if anyone's staying for that particular speaker, as soon as she arrives, I'll let you know, and we'll resume proceedings then rather



than wait 'til. Oh, okay, well, thank you, if you want to give her a ring, and if you go on a break on the live stream [laughs], we can find out what time she might be here and I can do a proper break 'til then. [laughter] There we are.

Welcome back, we have our final booked speaker for this evening. Can I invite Anna McMorran, Member of Parliament for Cardiff North to address us?

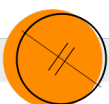
AM: Thank you very much. And my name is Anna McMorran, Member of Parliament, Welsh Labour Member of Parliament for Cardiff North, and I'm very grateful for the opportunity to speak here today at the Boundary Commission for Wales public hearing. Being one of four Welsh Labour Cardiff MPs, my submission today relates to the Commission's proposal for Cardiff North, but I will also touch upon the three adjoining seats; Cardiff Central, Cardiff West, and Cardiff South and Penarth. I welcome the initial proposals for the constituency of Cardiff North in my capacity as its Member of Parliament but also as a local resident, which would see Cardiff North remain largely intact with the addition of Taff's Well. I also welcome the initial proposals for the City of Cardiff, which would keep three of the four constituencies intact and entail just two wards within Cardiff moving constituency.

[02:31:55]

The proposals acknowledge the geographical links with the natural boundary of the river and would therefore be a natural addition to the constituency. There are ties, including road and rail connections between Taff's Well in North Cardiff, which make these proposals very sensible. And I know that the community of Taff's Well feel very much wedded to Cardiff socially, with community links and with transport links.

I would like to express my concerns over the Conservative's counterproposal to the boundaries which would see Llandaff North move from Cardiff North to Cardiff West, and Trowbridge added to Cardiff North. Given the natural, if I'm right, I'm not right. Okay. Okay. Given the natural boundary of the river, the people of Llandaff North and Whitchurch feel very connected as communities. The link to services and transport is all towards Whitchurch, the two areas of which I've lived for many years, in both areas, brought my children up, they share amenities, schools and services. By contrast, there is no natural link between Llandaff North and the other side of the river in Cardiff West in Llandaff. Despite sharing the name, there's no transport links, viable transport links, there's a very difficult road and there's a big river, main river, to cross. So there aren't proper transport links and it's very difficult to get across. Moving Llandaff North to Cardiff West would also draw a line through the Mynachdy estate, which is wholly in Cardiff North at the moment. And if Llandaff North were to move to Cardiff West, it would halve, slice down the middle, one of the oldest housing estates in Wales, as part of it is in the Gabalfa area. The Gabalfa ward is closely linked to Llandaff North, socially, community links, school ties, facilities amenities. The Gabalfa estate straddling the two wards, the Gabalfa roundabout brings together the communities of Whitchurch and Gabalfa.

Similarly, the Liberal Democrats counterproposal involves moving a higher number of wards between existing constituencies in Cardiff. This counterproposal would see Gabalfa and Heath, currently in Cardiff North moved to Cardiff Central and this, again, fails to take into consideration the very strong local ties that exist in these wards. The Heath ward is closely tied to Llanishen and Whitchurch, and these



communities are linked not just by transport but also school catchment areas and other social facilities. There is the, so I'm told there, that there isn't a proposal for Trowbridge, am I right?

AC: It isn't Trowbridge

AM: It isn't Trow..., okay, I don't know where I got that from. Thank you. So I would like to echo, though, my colleague and Member of Parliament for Cardiff Central, in noting my concerns for the negative impact on constituencies with a higher concentration of young people, students, migrants and disadvantaged communities. Equalisation of constituency should be based on overall adult population, not just those of the electoral register. As a Member of Parliament for Cardiff North, and my colleague as Member of Parliament for Cardiff Central, we represent every single one in our constituency and not just those registered to vote. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak today.

Chair: Diolch. Got any points for clarification? I think Steve's got one?

[02:36:03]

SP: Just a, an issue, really, around Taff's Well. I mean, you mentioned that you've had representation supporting its inclusion within Cardiff North constituency, but we've had various representation say the opposite, basically. Do you think that there are any alternatives at the borders of the existing constituency? So we heard from Jo Stevens earlier. I asked her a question about the affinity that Cynco..., the Cyncoed area has with Cardiff North, potentially. Or do you think that the existing boundaries are most certainly the, the best one, recognising of course that we're obliged to take into account existing constituencies in our deliberations?

AM: Yes. Sorry. And you are?

SP: I'm Steven Phillips. I'm one of the Assistant Commissioners.

AM: Thank you very much. Sorry [laughs]. Sorry to ask.

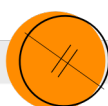
SP: That's fine

AC: I'm glad you said that, I didn't know

AM: [laughs] Yes, I think, so my discussions have been at a local level, talking to people within the community, knowing local people, how closely connected they feel in Trowbridge, in Trowbridge. I've got Trowbridge on the mind now 'cause [laughter]

Chair: Hitsome 02:37:19 waiting to happen now.

AM: [laughs] In Taff's Well. And, you know, I, I, I, I'm there sometimes. I was there a couple of months ago at a local centre there and I've talked to the local MP, and they feel very connected to Cardiff because of transport links, because of community links, because of amenities. It seems a sensible approach to, if you need to expand that, I mean, I'm happy with it as it is, Cardiff North, it's great, but, but to find an area to expand, I think that is, it works very well. Tongwynlais works very



well as part of Cardiff North. The people there feel very connected, they're part of that same valley. The river forms a natural boundary there, you've got the Transport for Wales operation there as well. It's very much Cardiff focused.

SP: Okay. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Are there any points of clarification? I know you've clarified that Trowbridge is the....

AM: I don't know where I've got that from then. That's bizarre.

AC: Splott and, Splott and Trowbridge go to..., go together in Cardiff South together with Rhymney in order to ensure there isn't a detached part. And then Llanrhymney would come into Cardiff North under our, our proposals.

[02:38:46]

AM: Yeah, yeah. So that's more to the east whereas we're talking about Taff's Well and Tongwynlais, as it is in Cardiff North but Taff's Well, Taff's Well, being a very natural form of calling it Cardiff North, and I think the people there would respond very well to that.

Chair: Thank you. Just some clarification from me around one of the points you raised about the people of Taff's Well. Has there been any discussions around calling it Cardiff North and Taff's Well? Or would they be happy just...?

AM: I haven't had those conversation but that's, that's an interesting idea.

Chair: If the feeling is that strong, if, you know....

AM: I don't, I don't think it is that strong there. I don't think, you know, you could call it, you could call it, start calling it Cardiff North and Tongwynlais and Taff's Well. You could start calling all sort, I think what is very important, certainly in Cardiff North, is that there are many, many small enclaves. So people of Whitchurch feel very wedded to being in Whitchurch. The people of Llanishen live in Llanishen. The people of Pontprennau live in Pontprennau. Lisvane feel very strongly that that's their village, that's Lisvane. And Llandaff North, although the Llandaff North and Whitchurch are very, very connected. So I think, unlike some of the other more city-based areas, I think it is very, there are strong identities within each of those areas, and Taff's Well would be part of that but within the Cardiff North constituency.

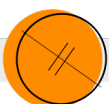
Chair: Diolch.

AM: Does that answer your question?

Chair: Yeah, that's fine.

AM: A longwinded way of saying-

Chair: That's fantastic. Thank you. If there are no questions for clarifications, diolch, Anna.



AM: Thank you.

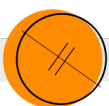
AC: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. For colleagues here, Anna's the last booked speaker-

AM: Thank you.

Chair No worries. The Commission, the assistant commissioners and myself, we will be here 'til 7:50 just in case somebody walks in, but if we don't come back online or we don't resume, we just wanna thank our colleagues for being here today and spending from, you know, 8am 'til 8pm with us. Or what time is it now? Half five? Thank you. And stay safe. Diolch.

[End of Transcription 02:41:00]





**Comisiwn Ffyniau
i Gymru**

**Boundary Commission
for Wales**

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