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Boundary Commission  
for Wales

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# Revised Proposals Consultation: Representations

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14.11.22

RE: REVIEW 2023 - Cynon Valley

Dear Madam

I am so concerned about the outcomes of the boundary changes that I felt it necessary to write to you personally.

As a resident of Aberdare with strong ancestral and family links to Mountain Ash, Penrhiwceiber and former business links to Abercynon I remain shocked that you have been put in the position of implementing the 2020 Act of Parliament ordering all parliamentary constituencies be equalised in size based on the 2020 Electoral Register.

Such a ludicrous task has resulted in changes that not only removes 8 Members of Parliament who have represented Wales (reduced from 40 to 32) but, with regard to the Cynon Valley, defies all the Commissioners criteria of:-

- *special geographical considerations – including, in particular, the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency and take into account local government boundaries in developing its proposals and recommendations for Parliamentary constituencies. These include both the external boundaries of principal councils and their internal electoral ward, community or community ward boundaries.*
- *local government boundaries that existed or were prospective on 1 December 2020*
- *any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies*

- *the inconveniences such changes create* as well as unnecessary name changes (9 across Wales). The impact of the latter shows a lack of financial and administration comprehension involved with so many changes.

In your review you state that the changes are “the most significant in a century” so the Act you are implementing conflicts with what has worked successfully for that amount of time. During that time the Cynon Valley has been formed due to the geographical nature of the Cynon River that eventually joins the River Taff south of Abercynon.

**Historical:-** It is a pity that as Mountain Ash was originally one of the three Glamorgan historic parishes along with Aberdare and Penderyn that the embedded culture and community ties between these towns and areas will now be broken. In 1918 the population began to increase with the creation of Merthyr & Aberdare Parliament seat (abolished in 1950) and eventually in 1974 Mountain Ash and Aberdare formed a vibrant industrial and cultural Borough Council followed in 1983 by the formation of the Cynon Valley Parliamentary Constituency resulting in residents identifying their community for over 104 years. Until now the valley, based on north to south geographical features, has grown as a close, sustainable community with the same identity even after the reorganisation of the local authorities in 2010. If a north to south boundary was acceptable after 1950 one has to raise the question why this has been ignored after 72 years.

The strong identity continues with other connections such as the opening of the Cwm Cynon hospital that replaced Mountain Ash and Aberdare hospitals in 2012. The Tower Colliery with its iconic history that will always be identified as a part of the Cynon Valley as will the historic iron industry.

**Cultural:-** There are numerous scientists, professors, artists, actors, authors and musicians who identify and continue to be identified with the Cynon Valley. Cultural links continue via the Aberdare & Mountain Ash Eisteddfods, Caradog, Nos Galon, the Cynon Valley Museum which celebrates the rich history of the Cynon Valley including the important connection to Richard Trevithick and his steam locomotive, the Aberdare Coliseum, the Dare Country Park and Aberdare Park along with centuries of famous choirs. The leisure centres & sport activities that serve the whole valley could be in peril due to the leagues and competitions that they are involved in. The removal of identity for the above by putting them under the name Merthyr or Pontypridd is cultural sabotage.

**Education:-** There are strong links between primary and secondary education under RCTCBC and any disruption to their identity and coalitions will be extremely detrimental for the young people of the valley. The boundary changes will cause chaos for governors, teachers and parents coping with the different aspects of governance under the local authority and UK parliament.

**Infrastructure:-** The A4059 links the whole of the valley through Mountain Ash to Aberdare and onwards to the north of the valley and is a natural alignment to the mountains and river courses.

Although there is a significant increase in car ownership mostly to access work there is still a majority who rely on public transport.

**South Cynon travel to Pontypridd:** Bus fares £6.80 one way for 2 people  
Train fares start at £3.40 one way £6.80 return

**North Cynon travel to Merthyr:** The zones 2 & 3 upgrading of A469 (Heads of Valley) is expected to be completed by 2025 but as the current plans are behind it is more likely to be 2026-7. With disruption now in its 17th week around Hirwaun and surrounding areas car and bus travel is chaos and not likely to improve access for party members and residents to access Merthyr Tydfil. There is no train infrastructure from Aberdare to Merthyr.

Bus fares from Aberaman/Cwmaman to Aberdare £2.00 to £4.00.

Bus fare from Aberdare to Merthyr Tydfil £4.00 to £7.00

Train from Aberdare to Merthyr Tydfil via Abercynon £14 to £20

**Statistics:-** The Cynon Valley population was 69,000 in 2010 whereas the Electoral population in 2020 was only 51,152 leaving no flexibility if old or new residents decide to register or 18 year olds reaching voting age before the next election.

There is high unemployment (non active) residents and this 22% puts the valley in the 10% most deprived areas in Wales and overall the majority of its areas are more deprived than the Wales average. One part of north of Cynon is such an area and to add this to an even poorer area of Merthyr will make the new constituency an economic disaster.

After every attempt to engage with the media concerning the demise of Cynon Valley the rare mentions by the press failed to notice that what is being imposed in Cynon is not as important as the splitting of the City of Chester in England. When the majority of the general public eventually discover what is going to happen there will be a backlash especially towards the connection with Merthyr Tydfil.

I will remain hopeful that a General Election is called before 1st July 2023 and that a new sensible Government will produce a constituency reorganisation Act that will retain the the Cynon Valley identity just as the present commission has kept other valleys identity with a north to south geographical boundary.

In conclusion as your final report for 1st July 2023 will not be presented for a democratic parliamentary vote I am asking the Welsh Commissioners to reconsider the radical change to Cynon Valley and resort back to what has worked significantly for over a century.

Yours sincerely

