

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 20th April 2023

Title: Review of Communities and Electoral Arrangements – Council Size Policy

Purpose of the report: To seek approval of the Council Size Policy to proceed with the Review of Communities and Electoral Arrangements

For: Decision

**Cabinet Portfolio and N/A
Cabinet Member:**

Introduction

It was reported to Council on 2nd March 2023 that a Review of Communities and Electoral arrangements would be undertaken over the next 15 – 18 months. The Council has a duty under Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 to keep its communities under review and report to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) on how it keeps its communities under review.

The review will include:

- Section 25 Review - A review of community boundaries. Should ensure that communities continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. This review would allow the council to make minor amendments to boundaries that may have become outdated due to housing developments, shifts in population etc. This review will consider any consequential changes required to the electoral arrangements because of any boundary changes and is the element that will be undertaken by the Commission.
- Section 31 Review - A review of the electoral arrangements. To identify issues with electoral arrangements of community/town councils independent of any boundary issues.

Council agreed to set up a Cross-Party Group, made up of 7 Councillors. The Group members are Councillors Clive Davies, Elizabeth Evans, Eryl Evans, Rhodri Evans, Gwyn Wigley Evans, Paul Hinge and Alun Williams.

Council Size Policy

The first task of the Cross-Party Group was to develop a Council Size Policy.

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales' guidance states that *"The Council Size Policy creates a mechanism to determine, for the principal area's community and town councils, the appropriate number of community councillors for a given town or community based on the electorate of the community. Ideally it*

should ensure that representation on a community or town council is, as far as is practicable, the same across all the community councils within the principal area”.

Consideration was given to a number of factors when creating the Council Size Policy, including:

- An approximate councillor allocation per electorate
- The difference between urban and rural councils
- Ensure community ties and land mass (i.e. the geographical size of any proposed Community Council)
- Provision of an overall minimum and maximum number of community councillors for a community council. Historically the minimum number of councillors for a community council has been 7, but some councils have used 6. The largest community council in Wales at present is 24. The maximum size may be dependent on the following factors (below) in this list.
 - The existing community council sizes
 - The scale of the activity of the community councils in a principal council area.
 - The geography of the principal council area
 - The population density of the principal council area.

The draft Council Size Policy is outlined in Appendix A of this report.

Next steps

The Council Size Policy will now be shared with Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales. Meetings will then be held with representatives from the Commission to agree a timeline for the Review.

The Commission will then be arranging meetings with Town and Community Council representatives.

	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why	Not applicable – not a service change
Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Summary:	
	Long term:	N/A
	Collaboration:	N/A
	Involvement:	N/A
	Prevention:	N/A
	Integration:	N/A
Recommendation(s):	That Council approves the Council Size Policy (as presented in Appendix A of the report).	
Reasons for decision:	To enable the Review of Communities and Electoral arrangements to be undertaken in accordance with Sections 25 and 31 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013.	
Overview and Scrutiny:	and N/A	

Policy Framework:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sections 25 and 31 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013; • Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales – Guidance for Principal Councils on the Review of Communities; • Council’s Constitution.
Corporate Well-being Objectives:	N/A
Finance and Procurement implications:	All costs associated with the Community Review will be met from the existing Electoral Services budget. The Commission’s fee for conducting the review is £13,500.
Legal Implications:	To ensure compliance with the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013
Staffing implications:	Within service.
Property / asset implications:	None
Risk(s):	Significant risk to the Council of not undertaking the Review.
Statutory Powers:	Sections 25 and 31 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013
Background Papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report presented to Council, 2nd March 2023; • Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales – Guidance for Principal Councils on the Review of Communities
Appendices:	Appendix A – Draft Council Size Policy Eifion Evans Chief Executive (Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer)
Reporting Officer:	Lowri Edwards Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services (Deputy Electoral Registration Officer and Deputy Returning Officer)
Date:	12 th April 2023