

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 30TH MARCH, 2023

REFERENCE FROM COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE: 23RD MARCH, 2023

“ THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL’S COMMUNITY BOUNDARY AREA REVIEW (ERO) –

The Chief Executive and Returning Officer for the Council presented the report, the purpose of which was to update the Committee on the Vale of Glamorgan Council’s Community Review which was being undertaken by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (“the Commission”) and commenced on 20th January, 2023.

The first stage of the review included investigation and an initial consultation period, which commenced on 1st February, 2023. The Commission (also present at the meeting) was seeking consultee responses from all interested parties in respect of the current community boundaries and their views on any changes required to create communities that provided for effective and workable local government. The closing date of the initial consultation period was 28th March, 2023, by which time the Chief Executive and Returning Officer recommended that all comments from Town and Community Councils should be submitted.

The report set out suggestions rather than recommendations from the Vale of Glamorgan Council for consideration by the Commission. The Chief Executive and Returning Officer added that each person/stakeholder would have a unique view on their respective area based on their role within their communities and it was important to note that there were a number of stages left to conduct for the review.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive and Returning Officer apprised the Committee on the eight key considerations of the Vale of Glamorgan Council in developing the Council’s response to the first stage of the review as set out in paragraph 2.8 of the report. Paragraph 2.10 onwards laid out the suggested proposals across the Vale of Glamorgan area, as discussed with the Cross-Party working group, for consideration by consultees and to facilitate more detailed consideration during the second stage of the review, subject to advice and guidance by the Commission.

Following the Officer’s presentation of the report, and subsequent comments raised by the Committee, the Chief Executive and Returning Officer added the following points of advice:

- For Town or Community Councils that were not referenced within the report this was indicative of there being no case for change.
- The Vale of Glamorgan Council was not actively setting out to reduce the number of Town and Community Councils within its area, but it had made

suggestions based on the aforementioned key considerations. The suggestions within the report were reflective of potential changes to boundaries and should be viewed as simply amalgamations of Councils. If all suggestions within the report were carried forward by the Commission, then the number of Councils would decrease but the number of wards would potentially increase in the more heavily populated areas. Therefore, any future change would reflect both increases and decreases across the area.

- It was acknowledged that Town and Community Councils would have a qualified and unique view on the suggested changes and therefore every Council as well as individual community representatives were strongly encouraged to submit their views to the Commission by 28th March. The Vale of Glamorgan Council was an independent stakeholder within the review and was therefore submitting its own views to the Commission for consideration.
- There were other stages of the review yet to be undertaken but elected representatives were requested to submit comments during the initial stages to ensure that the views of individual wards were heard.
- The comments and suggestions of the Vale of Glamorgan Council were being made at a strategic level and the suggestions did not deal with detailed matters of boundary lines, other than in areas where this related to anomalous boundaries. It was expected that Town and Community Councils would make detailed comments related to their particular areas and boundaries.
- The suggestion raised by the Wenvoe Community Council Representative in relation to the creation of an additional ward under their Council was not one that the Vale of Glamorgan Council had considered previously but was presented logically.
- The Committee debate demonstrated the range of different views that the Commission would need to consider in order to inform the review.
- It was acknowledged that salaried Clerk posts could be lost should larger rural Community Councils be created however, it was already current practice that a single Clerk provide support over multiple Community Councils.

With no further comments or questions from the Committee, the Committee clarified the comments and recommendations to be included within its decisions on the report. Following this, the Vice-Chair of the Committee requested that a vote be taken for the second recommendation put before the Committee.

Out of the two recommendations put before the Committee, Recommendation (1) was carried by no dissent and following a vote by Elected Members as well as a show of hands from Town and Community Council Representatives, Recommendation (2) was also carried as below.

AGREED –

(1) T H A T the Vale of Glamorgan Council's draft response to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales's initial consultation on the first stage of the community review be noted, along with the comments of the Committee on the suggestions raised within the report as follows:

- Llanmaes Community Council had a very distinctive rural outlook in comparison to its Llantwit Town Council neighbour. Therefore, Llanmaes Community Council was not in support of the suggestion set out in paragraph 2.16 of the report and wished to maintain its very active Community Council and subsequent community spirit.
- The preference of Llanfair Community Council was to remain as an independent Community Council and not move into the Cowbridge Town Council community boundary area as suggested in paragraph 2.29 of the report due to Cowbridge Town Council having a very different perspective on the three rural communities currently under the Community Council. Llanfair Community Council would also wish to ensure that the two wards of Llanfair and St. Hilary remain well defined in light of any future boundary changes.
- In response to the suggestion set out in paragraph 2.33 of the report, St. Donats Community Council had concerns that the St. Donats community voice would be lost should an amalgamation with the much larger Wick ward go ahead due to the uneven number of representatives across the collective wards as a result.
- Michaelston Le Pit and Leckwith Community Council strongly objected to any amalgamation with larger neighbouring Councils due to the Community Council having very specific rural needs within its community. This was in contrast to the proposals put forward by Dinas Powys Community Council as reflected in paragraphs 2.19 and 2.20 of the report.
- Wenvoe Community Council had a neutral stance on the suggestion of an amalgamation of St. Nicholas and Bonvilston with Dyffryn and St. Lythans, as set out in paragraphs 2.26 and 2.27 of the report but would welcome consultation with residents on the suggestion. The Wenvoe area had had a 60% increase in dwellings in the last four years. To ensure that the approximate 760 residents of both Brooklands Terrace and St. Lythans Park were represented, Wenvoe Community Council suggested that a new ward be created.
- Penarth Town Council endorsed the suggestions in relation to Penarth Town Council and eastern boundary of Sully and Lavernock Community Council as set out in paragraph 2.14 of the report.

(2) T H A T the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Community Boundary Area Review report be referred to Cabinet on 30th March, 2023, along with the recommendations of the Committee for consideration as follows:

- T H A T a new ward by the name of 'Brooklands' be established under Wenvoe Community Council to accommodate the electorate within the Brooklands Terrace and St. Lythans Park residential developments in the vicinity of Culverhouse Cross.
- T H A T the concerns expressed by Town and Community Council Representatives present at the meeting on retaining democracy at a local level to ensure that the local voice was heard and that smaller communities were well represented and retained their unique qualities be noted.

- T H A T the concern in relation to possible salary losses for Clerks of smaller Community Councils, should their Council be amalgamated with neighbouring Councils, be noted.

Reasons for decisions

(1) Having regard to the contents of the report to appraise the Community Liaison Committee on the Council's response to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales's initial consultation on the first stage of the community review.

(2) To apprise Cabinet of the recommendations of the Committee in relation to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's draft response to the initial consultation phase of the community review to inform any additional comments or observations from Cabinet forwarded to the commission under separate cover following the 28th March consultation deadline."