

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO:	<u>THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 20TH FEBRUARY, 2018</u>
REPORT OF:	<u>BUSINESS SUPPORT OFFICER - DEMOCRATIC & CORPORATE SUPPORT</u>

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. McCARTHY, B.A. (HONS) (CHAIR)

Councillors P. Baldwin
N. Daniels
K. Hayden
J. Millard
J. C. Morgan
K. Rowson
B. Summers
S. Thomas

AND: Head of Policy and Performance (designated Head of Democratic Services)
Corporate Support Manager
Elections & Land Charges Manager

ALSO: **Scrutiny Chairs & Vice-Chairs**
Councillors L. Elias
P. Edwards
H. Trollope

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1.	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the	

	simultaneous translation service.	
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillors J. Collins, M. Day, G. Thomas and M. Cook.</p>	
3.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
4.	<p><u>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee held on 7th November, 2017 were submitted for consideration; whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Proposed Procedures for an Elected Member Mentoring Framework</u></p> <p>A Member referred to an amendment on page 11 paragraph 6 of the Minutes, the words “Minority Group Members” should read “Labour Group Members”.</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
5.	<p><u>A REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS IN BLAENAU GWENT</u></p> <p><u>A CONSULTATION BY THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance.</p> <p>The Corporate Support Manager advised that the review</p>	

had been undertaken with a view to reduce the number of councillors and revise ward boundaries to have electoral parity i.e. similar number of electors per Councillor throughout the Borough. The proposal would be submitted to Council on 22nd March, 2018 and if agreed would be submitted to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales by the 27th March, 2018. The Commission would have the final say on the Council's proposal.

The Elections and Land Charges Manager spoke in detail to the report regarding ward structures and advised Members that natural boundaries had been used, wherever possible, to revise wards.

A Member raised an objection to the retail park being included in the proposed new Brynmawr ward, as this was currently within the Nantyglo ward. With the aid of a detailed map of the ward, the Elections and Land Charges Manager clarified the position of the proposed new boundary.

The Chair advised Members that these issues would be discussed in further detail in the wider public consultation by the Commission.

Another Member commented that this was a good compromise with a more balanced system in relation to the Nantyglo and Brynmawr wards and pointed out that over the years boundaries had become blurred when new developments had taken place.

The Corporate Support Manager informed Members that any personal observations submitted to The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission by Members would be considered by them along with their constituents' comments and observations.

A Member commented that public consultation would have an impact on discussions and enquired if the constituents of Lakeside would be at a disadvantage moving into the Brynmawr ward.

The Corporate Support Manager said that every ward had been reviewed with a view to providing improved electoral parity throughout the Borough. This may lead to financial implications for some properties due to variances in Council Tax because of varying town council rates. With regard to schemes such as Communities First it had not been possible to consider these schemes in relation to the revised boundary changes.

In response to a Member's question regarding the area of Bournville, the Elections and Land Charges Manager said that the 2010 Boundary Commission Report had consulted with residents who had stipulated that they would like the area of Bournville to be included in the Cwmtillery ward.

The Corporate Support Manager would provide Members with the 2010 Boundary Commission Report for information.

The Corporate Services Manager read through each of the proposed new ward names for Members' approval.

RESOLVED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the following proposals be agreed and recommended to Council for approval:-

- A reduction in the number of Councillors from 42 to 34 from 2022.
- A reduction in electoral wards from 16 to 14 wards.
- Revised boundaries for each of the 14 electoral wards as shown on the maps.
- That the proposal be submitted to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission of Wales by 27th March, 2018. The evidence and reasons for the proposal to also be submitted as part of the proposal.