



Report of the Returning Officer

Council – 7 September 2023

Review of Communities - Community / Town Council Size Policy

Purpose:	To consider a Community / Town Council Size Policy to assist with the Review of Communities process being carried out by the Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW).
Policy Framework:	None.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal, Constitution Working Group
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The Community / Town Council Size Policy be adopted.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Swansea Council has a duty under the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 to keep its communities under review and report to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW) every ten years.
- 1.2 The Review of Communities shall be based on the electorate published on 1 December 2022 and a 5-year forecast of electorate figures.
- 1.3 Any changes made at a Community level may lead to consequential changes being required to County Electoral Wards. To make these changes it is envisaged that the Commission will carry out the next

county review early in the next round of reviews and before the Local Government elections in 2027.

- 1.4 To achieve this, Council at its meeting on 30 March 2023 resolved that:
- i) The Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales conduct a Section 26 Review of Communities on behalf of the Council.
 - ii) The Constitution Working Group's Terms of Reference be amended to include:

"To oversee the Review of Communities and have responsibility for working with the Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales to ensure any recommendations accurately reflect Swansea's communities and the Terms of Reference of the Review of Communities."
 - iii) The Constitution Working Group consider a "Council Size Policy" and recommend such a Policy to Council in due course.

1.5 This report sets out a Community / Town Council Size Policy to be used as part of the Review of Communities.

1.6 The Constitution Working Group at its meeting on 4 August 2023 recommended this report to Council for approval.

2. Section 26 - A Review of Community Boundaries by Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW)

2.1 A Section 26 Review seeks to ensure that Communities continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient Local Government. This review allows the Council to 'tidy-up' boundaries that may have become outdated due to housing developments, shifts in population etc.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.

2.2 As part of the review, the Commission will have regard to:

- i) The creation, abolition or merging of Communities and Community wards.
- ii) The name of the Community and, where warded, the name of Community wards.
- iii) Where changes have been made to the boundaries of Communities or Community wards the number of Councillors representing the Community and, where warded, the number of Councillors per ward.

2.3 It is important to note that the whole County is divided into Community areas even where those areas are not served by a Community or Town Council. These areas will also be part of the review.

2.4 **Appendix A** sets out the Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales - Review of Community Arrangements for Swansea - Terms of Reference.

3. Community / Town Council Size Policy

3.1 Good practice suggests that the minimum number of Councillors for any Community / Town Councils should be no less than 7 and no more than 25.

3.2 To consider Community / Town Council size, Swansea Council believes that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography, and the pattern of communities. Nevertheless, having regard to the current powers of Community & Town Councils, it should consider the broad pattern of existing council sizes. This pattern appears to have stood the test of time and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to have provided for effective and convenient local government.

3.3 The Council shall bear in mind that the conduct of Community & Town Council business does not usually require a large body of Councillors. In addition, historically many Community / Town Councils, particularly smaller ones, have found difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates to stand for election. This has led to uncontested elections and / or a need to co-opt members to fill vacancies.

3.4 The table sets out the Community / Town Council Size ratio of Councillors to Electors:

Electors (Up to)	Councillors	Electors (Up to)	Councillors
1,000	7	12,500	17
2,000	8	15,000	18
3,000	9	20,000	19
4,000	10	25,000	20
5,000	11	30,000	21
6,000	12	35,000	22
7,000	13	40,000	23
8,000	14	45,000	24
9,000	15	50,000	25
10,000	16	-	-

3.5 **Appendix B** sets out the potential impact the Community / Town Council Size Ratios have on the Community / Town Councils within Swansea.

4. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 4.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also considers other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 4.4 An IIA Screening Form has been completed and no adverse implications have been noted.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Commissions fee for conducting the Review is £13,500. However, there are additional costs not included such as translation, printing, postage, newspaper adverts etc. The total cost will be approximately £20,000.
- 5.2 There is no core budget allocated for this periodic one off spend; however, the Section 151 Officer has committed to underwrite the spend by up to £20,000 from contingency.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 All legal implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales – Review of Community Arrangements for Swansea – Terms of Reference.

Appendix B - Community / Town Council Size Ratio Impact on Community / Town Councils in Swansea.