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Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/02989/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee,  
Senedd Cymru

[petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

27 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 18 November about petition P-05-1077 Stop the voting boundary change to Ystrad Mynach south

The petition relates to a recommendation contained within the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales' (the Commission) Final Report into the Review of the Electoral Arrangements of the County Borough of Caerphilly

It may be helpful if I set out the process and timetable for the current programme of reviews as background.

The Commission was established in 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972. It was re-named the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales in 2013 by the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (the 2013 Act). It is responsible for, amongst other things, keeping under review the electoral arrangements for the principal council areas in Wales and making proposals to the Welsh Government about changes it feels necessary in the interests of effective and convenient local government. This includes changes to electoral boundaries, ratios of councillors to electors or name changes to electoral wards.

In June 2016 the then Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government took the decision that all 22 electoral boundary reviews should take place within the current Local Government term i.e. in advance of the next elections in May 2022 and in sufficient time to enable changes in the electoral boundaries to be taken into account and reflected in Orders. In order to be in place before the principal council elections in May 2022 the reviews need to be completed and Orders in force by the end of September 2021 to provide local authorities with sufficient time to implement any changes. This programme of reviews is currently being progressed.

The 2013 Act sets out a detailed statutory process for conducting a review. This includes an initial engagement process with key stakeholders to inform a draft report which is the subject of consultation by the Commission with mandatory consultees and others to inform a final report which the Commission submit to Welsh Ministers.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Final report is then subject to a six week representation period to enable individuals / organisations to submit comments, observations and concerns about the recommendations contained within the final report. Following this period and consideration of the representations received Welsh Ministers are able to implement any recommendation (with or without modification) or decide to take no action.

It is important that each review follows the statutory process and that the integrity of the process is preserved. I regularly receive correspondence in connection with the reviews being undertaken and while it is not possible to answer them in detail, the points raised are considered when making decisions about each of the recommendations in each of the reports.

While I understand why individuals would seek to pursue petitions in these circumstances I am concerned this could become a routine route of representation which takes place in parallel to the established legal process.

As the Caerphilly report is currently progressing through the statutory process I am sure you will understand this is not a matter for which I can provide further information.

Yours sincerely,



**Julie James AS/MS**  
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