

# Amend the name of new electoral ward for Saltney, Flintshire to "Saltney and Saltney Ferry"

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Ebrill 2022  
Petitions Committee | 25 April 2022

Reference: RS22/2618-1

**Petition Number:** P-06-1265

**Petition title:** Amend the name of new electoral ward for Saltney, Flintshire to "Saltney and Saltney Ferry."

**Text of petition:**

The Minister for Local Government and Finance has decided that the name for the new single ward of Saltney Town in Flintshire shall be "Saltney Ferry". We believe that this is a decision based on an error in the Local Boundary Commission for Wales report and can result in confusion among local residents at elections.

The town of Saltney has a population of approx 5,500 of which only about 800 live in the small community known as Saltney Ferry which forms a small part of the town. Pages 65 and 66 of the Boundary Commission's report is that part that specifically refers to the background consultations and recommendations that followed of the LDBC that that led to the Minister's decision to call the new ward Saltney Ferry.

The huge majority of residents in Saltney believe this to be a ridiculous decision based on an error made when the report was written up and must be changed urgently.



## 1. Context

The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (“the 2013 Act”) established a legal process for conducting electoral and boundary reviews in Wales. The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (“the Commission”) is responsible for undertaking these reviews. Following extensive public consultation, which includes publication of draft proposals for each County in Wales, the Commission publishes and submits its final recommendations to the Welsh Ministers.

The Commission's final recommendations are then subject to a six week period when representations may be made to the Welsh Government. It is then for the Welsh Ministers to decide how to proceed, and whether to implement the Commission’s recommendations by Order.

## 2. The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales is an independent Welsh Government sponsored body established by the 2013 Act. The Commission is able to undertake work on its own initiative, at the request of a principal council in some circumstances or following direction by the Welsh Ministers.

On 23 June 2016, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government at the time, Mark Drakeford MS published a Written Statement asking the Commission to restart its 10 year electoral review programme. The programme would have a new prioritised timetable, with an expectation that all 22 electoral reviews be completed in time for the new arrangements to be put into place for the 2022 local government elections.

## 3. Boundary and Electoral Reviews

Over time, due to changes or shifts in population, there may be a need to make changes to boundaries of community areas or electoral arrangement in some or all of the 22 principal council areas in Wales. The Commission can make recommendations on a number of matters, including the appropriate number of elected members for each principal council, boundaries of electoral wards and whether a ward should be multi-member or not.

The Commission can make recommendations on electoral arrangements to the Welsh Ministers which it feels are in the interest of effective and convenient local government. This is set out in section 21(3) of the 2013 Act. In its [Electoral Reviews: Policy and Practice document](#), the Commission notes that:

The Commission will seek to provide the best level of electoral equality for each area under review and will take each case on its merit. The Commission takes the view that departing from the average ratio for the council can only be justified by clear evidence of other balancing factors, such as local ties or other relevant considerations.

The way the Commission conducts an electoral review is defined by the Act; through its Electoral Reviews: Policy and Practice document; and by directions issued by the Welsh Ministers. The Commission’s guidance for electoral reviews sets out the procedures and methodology it proposes to adopt in respect of reviews, including around changes to electoral ward names. It notes:

Where the Commission proposes to form new electoral wards the Commission will also suggest names for the new wards. Where appropriate the Commission will propose alternative English and/or Welsh names for the new wards...

During consultation periods the Commission welcomes suggestions for alternative names in Welsh and/or English as appropriate. The Commission favours names linked to the area under consideration.

The current programme of electoral reviews is [now complete](#), with Orders made for all 22 Principal Council areas.

## 4. Flintshire County Council Electoral Review

The electoral review for the county of Flintshire began in October 2018 when the Commission undertook an initial consultation with representatives of local government in the area between 1 November 2018 and 23 January 2019. A draft proposals report for the Electoral Arrangements of the [Flintshire County Council](#) was published in August 2019.

The Commission then undertook a further period of public consultation on the draft proposals between 5 September 2019 and 27 November 2019.

The Commission’s Final Recommendations for the future electoral arrangements for the County of Flintshire was submitted to the Welsh Ministers in June 2020.

In its Final Recommendations Report the Commission notes that:

The Commission received 118 representations from Flintshire County Council, 13 town or community councils, 21 on behalf of county councillors (individually or in groups), 11 Town or Community Councillors, 11 interested bodies and 61 members of the public. The Commission considered all these representations carefully before it formulated its recommendations.

A summary of the representations can be found in the Appendix 5 to the Final Recommendations Report.

Key recommendations include:

- a council of 66 members, a reduction from its current size of 70. This results in a recommended county average of 1,809 electors per member.
- 42 electoral wards, a reduction from 57 existing wards.
- 23 multi-member wards in the County consisting of 22 two-member electoral wards and one three-member electoral ward.

A statutory six week period for making representations to the Welsh Ministers began from the date the Commission’s recommendations were submitted to the Welsh Government.

## 5. Saltney Ferry

In its final recommendations report for the Flintshire County area, the Commission recommended combining two existing wards (Saltney Mold Junction and Saltney Stonebridge) into a single ward, to be represented by two councillors.

It noted that the Commission had proposed the single language name of **Saltney** for the ward, and that the Welsh Language Commissioner agreed with the proposed name. The Commission received representations from the Council and others stressing the importance of “historic names”, and that **Saltney Ferry** should form part of any recommended name for the new ward. The Commission as a result recommended the **single name of Saltney Ferry** for this electoral ward.

Appendix 5 of the report provides details about representations made to the Commission by councillors, residents and interested parties. Two residents and a town councillor called for an alternative name to that proposed by the Commission of **Saltney and Saltney Ferry**.

## 6. Welsh Government action

In a letter to the Chair of the Petitions Committee, the Minister for Finance and Local Government notes the representations made by some regarding the proposed name for the ward, and that:

my officials sought confirmation from the Commission about the recommended name. The Commission confirmed its intention was for the electoral ward to be named Saltney Ferry and not Saltney and Saltney Ferry.

The Minister goes on to state that:

In coming to my decision I considered all information available, including three representations proposing the name be changed from Saltney Ferry to Saltney and Saltney Ferry. On this occasion I decided to implement the Commission’s recommendation to name the electoral ward Saltney Ferry without modification. In this case the Commission made no recommendations to change the community arrangements and therefore they remain as at present

The review process is now complete, and local authorities are currently implementing the new arrangements which, are set out in Orders, to deliver the local elections on 5 May 2022. Nevertheless, the Minister does note in her letter that whilst it is not her intention to revisit the decisions taken, future reviews will be ‘conducted on a regular basis’, and that reviews:

will be open to Members of the Senedd, the council, communities and residents to put forward proposals for change as part of any future review.

## 7. Welsh Parliament action

Orders and regulations made under sections 37 to 39, and 43 of the 2013 Act (save s.37(1) and 41(1)), are only subject to the requirements and procedures set out in

those and associated sections. In practice, what this means is that these can be thought of as ‘no procedure’ statutory instruments and, as such, they are not subject to scrutiny by the Senedd via either the negative or affirmative procedure.

It should be noted however, that the specific procedures set out in the relevant sections impose a number of scrutiny type requirements such as consultation with specified parties, time limits, and where being made other than by Welsh Government, approval of the Welsh Ministers.

The Welsh Ministers will therefore make a decision on whether to implement the recommendations of the Commission by Order, with or without modification – or not at all following a period of representation.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.