

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/02677/20

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2 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 13th October following the Petitions Committee's consideration of petition P-05-1007 Merge Hope and Caergwrle into a two-member ward in the County of Flintshire.

I understand the concerns raised by the petitioner about proceeding with this review and the suggestion that it be paused while the Coronavirus pandemic remains active within communities.

In my letter of 14 September I confirmed the approach being taken in relation to the current programme of reviews, which involves each local authority area across Wales. To ensure any changes to electoral boundaries can be made in advance of the next local government elections in May 2022 the reviews need to be completed and Orders in force by the end of September 2021. This will provide local authorities with sufficient time to implement any changes.

While consideration has been given to pausing the review process I consider it important to ensure the electoral boundaries reflect, as far as possible, the changes within local authority areas. There is a significant amount of work still to be completed and while Covid-19 has resulted in some delays our aim is to complete the reviews and any required Orders by September 2021.

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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.

On the point of community cohesion, I can confirm the Commission are required by Section 30 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (the Act) to:

- (a) seek to ensure that the ratio of local government electors to the number of members of the council to be elected is, as nearly as may be, the same in every electoral ward of the principal area; and
- (b) have regard to:
 - (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries for electoral wards which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
 - (ii) the desirability of not breaking local ties when fixing boundaries for electoral wards. The Boundary Commission considered all of the representations they received before formulating their final proposals.

I consider this approach to be wide enough to consider the issues raised by the petitioner. On reviewing each of the electoral arrangements I will be giving careful consideration to the views expressed by local communities and the response of the Commission.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AS/MS
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