

Bridgend County Borough Council



Coity Higher Community Council

Electoral Arrangement Review

Final Proposals

January 2022

Introduction

Bridgend County Borough Council has a duty under Section 55(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 to keep under review the boundaries and electoral arrangements of the communities within Bridgend. To ensure compliance with the legislation, following a formal request from Coity Higher Community Council (CHCC), Bridgend County Borough Council agreed at its Council meeting on 17 November 2021 to commence a review of the CHCC electoral arrangements.

Public notice of the intention to commence a review of CHCC was given on the 17 November 2021 with the publication of the Terms of Reference for the review and the draft proposal from the CHCC who had submitted the proposal following a Community Council meeting.

A 6-week consultation commenced on the 24 November 2021 inviting initial comments from stakeholders to be submitted by post or email to the Electoral Office. The consultation period ended on the 5 January 2022.

In formulating the final proposals, the draft proposals were reviewed taking into consideration representations received at the draft consultation stage, as well as guidance received from the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

The final proposals for the community electoral review need to be agreed by Full Council before being submitted to Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales will consider any further comments from councilors and stakeholders, who must respond directly to the Commission with their comments on the final proposals. The Commission will consider any representations made when deciding on the final proposals before an order can be prepared.

It is anticipated the changes will come into force in time for the Local Elections in May 2022.

Summary of Proposal

Coity Higher Community Council currently has three wards: Coity, Litchard and Pendre. This consultation does not change these wards or consider any boundary changes as these will be considered as part of a wider County Borough review of all Town & Community Councils that will be Implemented for the 2027 Local Elections.

The current and draft proposed electoral arrangements, submitted by Coity Higher Community Council, for each ward is shown below: -

Coity Higher Community Council	Council Electorate	No. Of Cllrs at present	Cllr/Elector Ratio	Proposed number of Cllrs	Cllr/Elector Ratio
Coity Ward	3,566	2	1,783	5	713
Litchard Ward	2,172	5	434	4	543
Pendre Ward	1,777	4	444	4	444

The Council accepted the draft proposal from the Community Council as the higher ratio in the Coity ward is reflective of the density of the population within the large housing development site at Parc Derwen, which is mainly responsible for the increase in the electoral population within the Coity ward

Representations Received Prior to Final Proposals

There were 4 responses received; 2 from the existing Coity ward members of the Community Council, 1 from the County Borough Member for Coity and one from the Leader of the Independents Alliance within Bridgend County Borough Council.

All were in agreement to the change from 11 to 13 Members for the Community Council but all objected to the distribution of Community Council seats between the Wards. All respondents preferred a more equal Member / Elector ratio between the wards giving a split of Coity – 6, Litchard -4, and Pendre – 3.

The Coity representatives in particular objected to the view that the Parc Derwen Housing Estate should be used to skew the representation figures given that the Coity ward also has a large rural area. There was also a view that the vote on the draft proposals put forward by the Community Councils was heavily skewed by councillors from Litchard and Pendre, who currently have the majority on the Council.

Final Proposal

One of the key Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales key principles is to provide for better levels of electoral parity within Councils across Wales.

In view of the representations received from key stakeholders and the key principle of electoral parity from the key Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, the final proposal is to create parity between the wards whilst maintaining the number of seats at 13.

The allocation of seats will therefore be Coity – 6, Litchard 4, Pendre 3.

The Table below summarizes the Final Proposal: -

Coity Higher Community Council Electoral Arrangements										
Wards	Existing				Draft Proposal			Final Proposal		
	Electors	Town Councillors	Electors per Councillor	Variance	Town Councillors	Electors per Councillor	Variance	Town Councillors	Electors per Councillor	Variance
Coity	3,566	2	1783	161%	5	713	23%	6	594	3%
Litchard	2,172	5	434	-36%	4	543	-6%	4	543	-6%
Pendre	1,777	4	444	-35%	4	444	-23%	3	592	2%
Total	7515	11	683		13	578		13	578	

Responding to the Final Proposals

The County Borough Council will not conduct any consultation into its final proposals. Whilst it has undertaken consultation on the draft proposals, once Full Council have approved the final proposals, they will be passed to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales who will consider any further comments made direct to them within 6 weeks before confirming the making of Order to implement the changes.

Appendix A

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Representations received

January 2022

Email from Cllr Alex Williams – Group Leader, Independent Alliance

My view is that this means that Coity is still under-represented under this draft proposal and that the new ratio should be 6 (Coity), 4 (Litchard) and 3 (Pendre) which results in a far more equal Cllr/Elector ratio.

Best wishes

Alex

Y Cyng | Cllr Alex Williams
(Penprysg)
Arweinydd Grwp, Cynghrair Annibynnol
| Group Leader, Independent Alliance

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar
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Email From Cllr Amanda Williams – County Borough Councillor - Coity Ward

I am happy that the review is being undertaken but unhappy with the split!

If a split of 6,4,3 was made then the ratio would be

Coity 592.6

Litchard 543

Pendre 592.3

Which is much fairer. If you look at bcbc council referral rates then you will see that there are far more in coity despite the density of houses in parc derwen. I always group similar issues together fit referrals too and they do not include the numerous referrals to persimmon. In addition there are densely populated areas in both Litchard and pendre. Plus coity and Litchard also have schools and a community governor needs to come from the coity councillors and Litchard councillors whereas pendre do not have a school or this requirement.

The purpose of this review is because the numbers are not currently fair. This suggestion again isn't fair and the numbers do not reflect the whole purpose of the exercise. The numbers were put forward by the community council as a vote was undertaken heavily skewed by councillors from Litchard and pendre, which is again the reason why the current numbers are unfair.

I will support a split of 6,4,3 as outlined above as I know would the electorate in coity, which represents 47% of the electorate!

Amanda

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Email From Martin Williams - Community Councillor Coity Ward

Firstly, I fully support the review and am grateful to BCBC for undertaking it at short notice.

However, I would like to highlight the fact that although the community council has expressed its opinion that was not entirely shared by the two Coity ward community councillors.

I agree that the council should be increased to 13 members. Not only does this recognise the increase in overall population within the community but it is more easily divisible according to relative populations.

This is where I fundamentally disagree with my community council colleagues.

I am of the firm view that the council seats should be divided according to the relative populations within each ward. From the chart attached it is therefore clear that the split should be 6 - Coity, 4 - Litchard and 3 - Pendre.

It would be perverse to seek to rectify the current mathematical imbalance by ignoring the maths in the new arrangements.

The 6,4,4 split proposed by the council has no basis in terms of the population split. It leave Pendre unchanged and over represented, Litchard reduced and Coity increased yet still under represented. Given that this proposal is arbitrary it will be difficult to defend to residents when Pendre has half the population of Coity yet would have 80% of the seats.

It is worthy of note that the community council's decision was reached as a result of a (rare) vote during which the two Coity ward councillors were outvoted. This in itself is an argument for equal representation based on relative population split.

I have heard the argument that the 6,4,4 proposal can be justified on the spurious basis that Parc Derwen in particular is more densely populated than Litchard or Pendre. Not only do I reject this but if you consider the Coity ward as a whole the large rural aspect more than dilutes the density of Parc Derwen.

In summary, whilst I support the increase to 13 councillors I am strongly opposed to the 6,4,4 split and believe that it should be in line with relative populations as outlined above.

Kind regards

Martin Williams
Community Councillor - Coity Ward

Attachment: -

Ward	Est Population	Percentage	Seats							
			Current	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Coity	3556	47.38%	2	5.21	5.69	6.16	6.63	7.11	7.58	8.05
Litchard	2172	28.94%	5	3.18	3.47	3.76	4.05	4.34	4.63	4.92
Pendre	1777	23.68%	4	2.60	2.84	3.08	3.31	3.55	3.79	4.03
Total	7505		11							

Email From Alison Hughes - Community Councillor Coity Ward

I refer to the recent review of the electoral arrangements for the above Community Council.

I am aware that you have been contacted by my co-councillor Martin Williams, and, rather than repeat his concerns about the imbalance that would occur if the current proposed split of councillors of 6,4,4 was implemented, I would confirm that I concur with his calculations that a 6 (Coity), 4 (Litchard) and 3 (Pendre) split of community councillors would be a much fairer representation of the wards. I believe that this would allow for each ward to have a more equal representation based on population numbers which in my opinion is the fairest way to calculate the number of councillors required.

Kind regards

Alison Hughes
Community Councillor Coity Ward