

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>22 OCTOBER 2025</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ARRANGEMENTS</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>NAOMI ROBERTS ELECTORAL SERVICES MANAGER</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council previously adopted Terms of Reference for a Community Arrangements Review of all Town &amp; Community Councils under Section 25 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013.</li> <li>• The review considered creating, merging, altering or abolishing communities; the naming of communities; and the electoral arrangements for communities - council size; number of councillors, and community warding.</li> <li>• The review was conducted through three stages: Initial consultation phase, draft recommendations report with further period of consultation, and a final recommendation report with a final period of representations to be made to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW).</li> <li>• Changes to Communities will take effect from the Local Elections in May 2027.</li> <li>• A member Panel was set up to review the responses from the initial consultation; agree the draft recommendations; review any responses to the draft report; and agree the final recommendations for Council to approve and submit to the LDBCW.</li> </ul>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present final proposals for Council to consider and, if agreed, seek authority to submit such proposals to the Local and Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales ('LDBCW') who are the

implementing body for the review.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The review and implementation of the Council's ward boundaries and electoral arrangements was carried out by the LDBCW and implemented for the May 2022 Local Elections.
- 2.2 The LDBCW review also included some consequential changes to Brackla Community Council and Porthcawl Town Council. These were also implemented for the May 2022 Local Elections.
- 2.3 The Council undertook a review of the electoral arrangements in Coity Higher Community Council following a formal request from them. These changes were also implemented for the May 2022 Local Elections.
- 2.4 The Council has a duty under section 22 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 ("the Act") to report every ten years on a community review having regard to the LDBCW timetable for conducting the reviews of principal areas' electoral arrangements required by section 29(1) of the Act.
- 2.5 A review of Community Arrangements is a legal process whereby the Council will consult with those living in the area, and other interested parties, on the most suitable ways of representing the people in the area identified in the review. This means making sure that those living in the area, and other interested groups, have a say in how their local communities are represented.
- 2.6 The last full Community review was finalised in 2009 and would normally follow a 10-year cycle. The delays to the completion of the Bridgend Electoral Review and the pandemic resulted in insufficient time to undertake a full review in time for the Local Elections in May 2022.

## **3. Current situation / proposal**

- 3.1 Reviews must be carried out in accordance with the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013. Section 25 covers the changes to boundaries and any consequential changes to electoral arrangements; and Section 31 only covers changes to electoral arrangements. The Council must undertake a Section 25 review first and, if necessary, follow up with a Section 31 review.
- 3.2 Any review of Boundaries must reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. A review offers an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries tied to ground features, and to remove any anomalous boundaries that exist.
- 3.3 A review can consider one or more of the following options:
  - creating, merging, altering or abolishing communities;
  - the naming of communities and the style of new communities and the creation of town councils;
  - the electoral arrangements for communities (for instance, the council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and community warding);

- grouping communities under a common community council or de-grouping communities

- 3.4 In June 2023 Council approved Terms of Reference for the review which set out the scope and indicative timetable, which included key consultation periods to allow plenty of time for responses to be received, allowing communities to participate meaningfully in the process.
- 3.5 Council also approved the creation of a Member Panel to support the effective review of responses to the consultation exercises and agree the draft proposals. The Panel considered the responses to the consultation exercises and contributed to the recommendations. The Panel was politically and geographically balanced.
- 3.6 During the process Council have approved a size policy for Town and Community Councils. This determined a minimum size of electorate for a community council to be in the region of 5,000 electors with an upper electorate limit in the region of 10,000 electors, and for town councils to have a minimum electorate in the region of 9,000 but with no maximum limit.
- 3.7 Attached at **Appendix 1** is the final report which has been prepared following the review process, public consultation and input from the Member Panel. Responses to the review are attached at **Appendix 2**. If the recommendations are accepted by Council any changes to the arrangement of communities will take effect at the next scheduled Town and Community elections in May 2027.
- 3.8 Should Council not agree the recommendations, the changes will not be implemented by the 2027 elections. Following those elections the Boundary Commission will undertake a review at a financial cost to the Council. Any changes they implement will not take effect until 2032.

#### **4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

#### **5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

#### **6. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications from this report.

#### **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications from this report.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this review. If the LDBCW have to undertake a review on our behalf they will charge for the service

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 To note the Final Report of the Review of the Communiity Arrangements of Bridgend County Borough Council.
- 9.2 To approve the recommendations as set out in the report and agree to submit the proposals to the Local and Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales ('LDBCW').

## **Background documents**

None