

# Break up the County of Rhondda Cynon Taff and join the Cynon Valley to Merthyr County

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021  
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: RS21/0189

**Petition Number:** P-06-1162

**Petition title:** Break up the County of Rhondda Cynon Taff and join the Cynon Valley to Merthyr County

**Text of petition:** During these local lockdowns it has become very obvious that Cynon Valley (mostly Aberdare) is totally disconnected to the rest of Rhondda Cynon Taff. All of the local amenities in our area has been moved to Merthyr - our court, hospital, registry for births/deaths, our shopping centre, etc.

This became very obvious when the residents of Aberdare have been told we cannot travel to Merthyr but has to travel all the way to Llantrisant, have you ever tried going there on public transport either?

There is a general consensus in Aberdare that we are the poor relation to the spending being used in Pontypridd/Talbot Green etc because they are based closer to the Capital, Rhondda gets a lot of funding as classed as a deprived area, and the residents of Cynon Valley have to fund raise to get any amenities for example the splash pad in the park, yet Ponty got the Lido and splash park. They had all the relief road around Church Village years ago and we are still waiting for the road to be duelled between us and Merthyr, even though it is classed as one of the most dangerous roads in South Wales.

With the population of RCT being the 3rd largest in Wales just behind the two cities of Swansea and Cardiff, and covering one of the largest areas behind Powys, it is clear this County is not fit for purpose.



With forward thinking Merthyr County, we believe we would flourish and be a better run county especially with local lockdowns looking at becoming the thing of the future.

## 1. Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales

The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (as amended) (“the Act”) established a legal process for conducting **boundary** and **electoral arrangement reviews** in Wales. The Act established the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (“the Commission”), an independent Welsh Government sponsored body. Its role is to monitor and review the areas and electoral arrangements relevant to the local government structure in Wales.

Section 14 of the Act provides the Welsh Ministers with a **general power of direction** of the Commission. The Commission must comply with any direction (general or specific) given to it by the Welsh Ministers.

### Boundary Review of Principal Areas

The Commission may of its own initiative or at the request of a Principal Council (local authority), conduct a **review of one or more principal areas** (local authority boundaries) in Wales. Section 23 of the Act sets out the requirements for a review of a principal area.

Following a review of a principal area boundaries, the Commission must make proposals to the Welsh Ministers. In their proposals, the Commission may propose such principal area changes as appropriate, including:

- altering the boundary of a principal area;
- abolishing a principal area; or
- constituting a new principal area.

The Commission has published guidance on the procedures in relation to principal area reviews in Wales. It has not conducted a **review of a principal area** since the passing of the 2013 Act.

### Other types of boundary reviews

The Commission also has powers to conduct a **review of community boundaries** within a local authority area, and to review **preserved counties** and **Seaward boundaries**. The most recent community review to be undertaken was in Monmouthshire, with the [Commission's Final Recommendations](#) published in January 2019.

## Electoral arrangements review

The Act also places a duty on the Commission to conduct a review of **electoral arrangements** for principal areas, at least once in every review period. The Commission's website states that the objective of an electoral review is to ensure that:

within each local authority area, electoral arrangements seek to achieve parity. Utilising the existing community structure within a local authority, an electoral review will take into account community identities, electoral equality and consultation feedback to ensure that our proposals uphold the interests of effective and convenient local government for the electorate within Wales.

The Commission must publish a timetable for conducting all 22 reviews, publish draft proposals, consult extensively and submit its final recommendations to the Welsh Ministers. The latest information on the current electoral review process can be found on the [Welsh Government's website](#).

## 2. Welsh Government action

The 2013 Act allows Welsh Ministers to give the Commission directions relating to the exercise of its review functions. The Welsh Ministers also have powers to direct the Commission to conduct a review, or a further review of a particular area following the Commission's recommendations.

The direction may specify particular matters that the Welsh Ministers wish the Commission to have regards to when conducting the review.

Section 37 of the 2013 Act makes provision for the Welsh Ministers to implement the Commission's recommendations in relation to a review under section 23 (review of principal area boundary). The Welsh Minister may, by Order, 'implement any recommendation, **with or without modification**' or 'decide to take **no action**'.

The Welsh Government has not made any statement or provided information relating to this petition.

### 3. Senedd 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.

This issue has not been considered by the Senedd.

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.