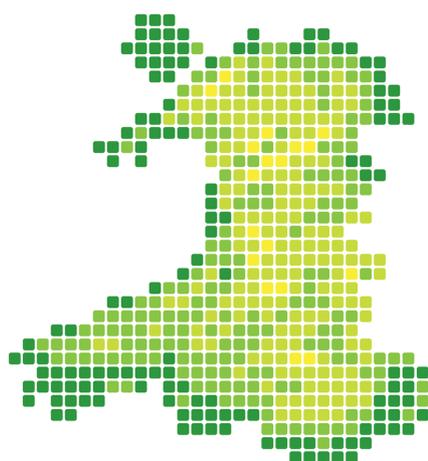


Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales



Comisiwn Ffiniau a
Democratiaeth Leol
Cymru



Local Democracy and
Boundary Commission
For Wales

Corporate Plan 2016- 2023

Revised November 2019
This document is available in Welsh

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1. Introduction

This Corporate Plan, for the period 2016 – 2023 has been updated following the implementation of a 'Change Programme'. The Commission is now well underway in the undertaking of a programme of reviews of the electoral arrangements of the 22 principal councils in Wales. This programme is required to be completed in time for the local government elections in 2022. In effect this means that the final reviews in the programme will need to be completed by the summer of 2021 at the latest to allow sufficient time for preparations for the elections to be made. The scale and importance of this programme of reviews will constitute the major part of the work of the Commission during the period of this Corporate Plan.

Ceri Stradling
Interim Chair

2. Our mission

The role of the Commission is to review electoral arrangements in order to achieve effective and convenient local government.

3. Our vision and values

Our Vision

To create Electoral Arrangements across Principal Councils in Wales which aim to promote democracy through fairer electoral representation, by creating boundaries which are meaningful to electors and which respect community ties and geographical links.

Our Values

Independent - We are an independent body, politically impartial.

Inclusive – We engage extensively with Councils, stakeholders, the general public and staff to inform our decisions and to disseminate information.

Evidence-based – We consider data, information and representations in order to make evidence-based decisions, in line with our policy and practice, underpinned by legislation.

Transparent – We abide by the civil service guidance and ensure that robust governance is in place within our organisation and its processes.

4. About us

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body established in its original form by the Local Government Act 1972 and under its current name and functions by the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013. The Commission's duty under the legislation is to monitor the areas and electoral arrangements relevant to local government in Wales for the purpose of considering whether it is appropriate to make or recommend changes. In carrying out its duties the Commission must seek to ensure effective and convenient local government.

The membership of the Commission consists of a Chair, Deputy Chair and three Members. The Commission has an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee which is made up of the Deputy Chair and two Members and an Independent Member.

The Commission is supported by a Secretariat headed by a Chief Executive with an Office in Cardiff.

A framework has been agreed between the Commission and its Welsh Government Sponsor Division (Local Government Democracy Division). This sets out the framework within which the Commission operates and details the terms and conditions under which the Welsh Ministers provide grant-in-aid to the Commission.

Each year Welsh Ministers set out the Government's policy aims and areas for key performance indicators by means of a Remit Letter to the Commission. The Remit letter also includes details of the voted grant-in-aid figure and related budgetary control totals for the coming financial year.

The Secretariat also supports the Boundary Commission for Wales which is responsible for reviews of United Kingdom Parliament constituencies in Wales. The Secretariat is funded separately by the Cabinet Office for that work.

5. Our corporate objectives

The Commission's corporate objectives are as follows:

- Ensuring principal area electoral arrangements are fit for purpose – developing a programme of electoral reviews in line with Welsh Government policy objectives.
- Ensuring community boundaries and electoral arrangements are fit for purpose - Work with principal councils to ensure Community boundaries and electoral arrangements are regularly reviewed and coordinated with the programme of electoral reviews.
- Ensuring the boundaries of principal council areas are fit for purpose – As appropriate review principal area boundaries.
- Developing the effectiveness and efficiency of our business – Maintain a high level of Corporate Governance, constantly engage with stakeholders to create a reputation for excellence in all that we do and ensure that the skills of the staff are developed and maintained.
- Ensuring that the Welsh Government's principles in respect of sustainable development, equality and diversity and the Welsh language are embedded in our work.

6. Our priorities

Principal Area Electoral Arrangements

We will periodically undertake a programme of reviews of the electoral arrangements of the principal council areas as required by the current legislation.

The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (the 2013 Act) requires the Commission to conduct a review of the electoral arrangements for each principal area at least once every ten years. The ten-year period began at the beginning of October 2013 and ends at the end of September 2023.

In June 2016 the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government wrote to the Commission to request the undertaking of a programme of electoral reviews to be completed in time for the 2022 local government elections. A timetable for the reviews was agreed and published as part of a revised Policy and Practice document in November 2016. The review programme is at Appendix A.

Before the end of September 2023 the Commission will produce a further 10-year programme of reviews for agreement with Welsh Government.

Community Boundaries and Electoral Arrangements

We will work with principal councils to ensure Community boundaries and electoral arrangements are regularly reviewed.

Every ten years each principal council is required to report to the Commission how it has discharged its duty to monitor the communities and the electoral arrangements of the communities in their area and, where appropriate, following a review, made or recommend changes. We will consider such reports as they are received and will report our findings and, if appropriate, recommendations, back to the principle council and to Welsh Ministers.

Following a review of its community boundaries by a principal council it may submit a report to the Commission containing recommendations for changes. We will consider such reports as they are received. Following our consideration we may make an order implementing the changes without modification or we may make an order implementing changes with modifications that have been agreed with the principal council. Under certain circumstances (as described by the 2013 Act) we may decide to conduct our own review.

Principal Area Boundaries

The Commission may, of its own initiative, at the request of a local authority or as a result of a Direction from Welsh Ministers, review the boundaries of one or more principal areas.

It is anticipated that such reviews will occur infrequently. In order to anticipate the need for such changes we will work with the principal councils to monitor changes, such as housing or other developments, that may lead to the call for a boundary review.

Business Effectiveness and Efficiency

We will maintain a high level of Corporate Governance, constantly engage with stakeholders to create a reputation for excellence in all that we do and ensure that the skills of the staff are developed and maintained.

In carrying out our duties, we will act in accordance with the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. We will maintain effective arrangements for corporate governance and have an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee that will advise the Commission on the discharge of its responsibility for thorough and effective governance, and for the economic, efficient and effective discharge of its responsibilities. We have a Framework Document agreed with Welsh Government that sets out the broad framework within which the Commission operates and details the terms and conditions under which the Welsh Ministers provide grant-in-aid to the Commission. The Commission's statutory accounting and reporting requirements are set out in section 19 the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013

The Commission maintains a Communications Strategy that sets out how the Commission will use its communications and public affairs capacity to ensure that it:

- Meets its statutory obligation to consult publicly as part of its review work.
- Encourages the submission of high quality evidence to assist its decision making.
- Promotes positive and constructive relationships with partners who influence the work of the Commission and improves customer satisfaction.

We seek to develop the skills of members of staff by providing training opportunities based on the needs of the Commission and of the individuals.

Maintain Principles

We will ensure that the Welsh Government's principles in respect of sustainable development, equality and diversity and the Welsh language are embedded in our work.

Sustainable development is a central guiding principle for all of the Commission's activities. This includes strategy and policy development, service delivery, partnership work and the way the organisation is run. The Commission's remit of making recommendations in respect of local authority boundary and electoral reviews to ensure effective and convenient local government has sustainable development at its core. When introducing new policies the Commission is mindful of the Welsh Government's responsibilities towards sustainable development.

We are fully committed to the principles behind the legislative requirements placed on the organisation in respect of equality and diversity. We will seek to prioritise equal opportunities in making appointments or secondments to the Commission's staff. In line with this initiative, we will keep under review all internal policies and procedures to ensure that they comply with best practice, reflect the Welsh Government's objectives and that the equality impact is assessed. We will encourage members of staff to improve their understanding of equality and diversity and to be aware of changes in legislation by providing appropriate training and the opportunities to put into practice the principles they have learnt. We are also aware of the Welsh Government's commitment to increase diversity in public appointments through increasing the number of women and other under-represented groups in public appointments in Wales and have committed to work with Welsh Government to take action on this issue.

We fully support the policy of the Welsh Government to promote the Welsh language and will continue to consider the Welsh language in all of our activities. We operate on the basis of full bilingualism and all published materials are produced in both languages, simultaneously. Members of the public are given the opportunity to use the language of their choice on every occasion they make contact with the Commission. We are developing a procedure which will ensure the potential impact on the Welsh language is taken into account as part of our review process and during the consideration of principal councils' proposals. In addition to this procedure the Welsh Language Commissioner is included as a consultee during our reviews. We are also developing procedures, in respect of policies and services which will promote the routine consideration of Welsh language issues at the Commission. We are committed to working with the Welsh Language Commissioner to ensure that the work of the Commission is fully compliant with the Welsh Language Standards.

7. Making it happen

To achieve our Plan we will focus on four things: leadership, strategy, delivery and governance:

- leadership – we will:
 - set a clear direction
 - work to encourage the participation of our stakeholders
 - take responsibility for leading change
 - build the capacity of our staff

- strategy – informed by the Welsh Government's policy framework – we will:
 - describe in a clear and compelling way the outcomes that we want to achieve

- show that the choices we have had to make are based on informed judgement and valid research
- build a sense of common purpose in the local government community that unites action around our strategy objectives
- delivery – based on our strategic priorities – we will:
 - plan, prioritise and resource the programme of activities that will achieve our objectives
 - develop clear roles, responsibilities and delivery models (both internally and externally)
 - manage, monitor (including seeking feedback from stakeholders) and report our performance
- governance – following public service good practice – we will:
 - manage and report risks
 - operate an effective system of financial reporting and control

8. Finances

The Commission's grant-in-aid was set at £895,650 for the financial year 2019/20.

For future years we will hold discussions with Welsh Government in order to secure appropriate funding to undertake an agreed programme of electoral reviews and to undertake work on community reviews as and when necessary.

9. Further Information

For the latest information about the work of the Commission please see our web site at www.ldbc.gov.wales

	2017				2018				2019				2020				2021				2022			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																				
Ceredigion	S			D						F														
Gwynedd	S			D				F																
Powys	S				D				F															
Conwy		S			D					F														
Pembrokeshire			S			D					F													
Torfaen			S			D		F																
Carmarthenshire				S			D				F													
Denbighshire				S			D			F														
Blaenau Gwent					S		D			F														
Bridgend					S				D			F												
Merthyr Tydfil						S				D		F												
Swansea						S					D		F											
Neath Port Talbot							S					D			F									
Rhondda Cynon Taf							S			D			F											
Wrexham								S					D			F								
Flintshire								S			D			F										
Newport									S				D			F								
Caerphilly									S				D			F								
Cardiff										S			D			F								
Vale of Glamorgan										S			D			F								
Isle of Anglesey											S			D			F							
Monmouthshire													S			D			F					

S - Start of review D - Draft Proposals F - Final Proposals