

# REVIEW OF PART OF THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT AND CAERPHILLY REPORT AND PROPOSALS

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The Rt. Hon Alun Michael JP MP AM  
First Secretary

The National Assembly for Wales

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission), have completed the review of part of the boundary between the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent and the County Borough of Caerphilly in the area of Tafarnaubach and present our proposals for a new boundary.

## 2. SCOPE AND OBJECT OF THE REVIEW

2.1 Section 54(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the Act) provides that the Commission may in consequence of a review conducted by them make proposals to the National Assembly for Wales for effecting changes appearing to the Commission desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government.

### Procedure

2.2 Section 60 of the Act lays down procedural guidelines which are to be followed in carrying out a review. In line with that guidance, we wrote on 29 January 1999 to Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly County Borough Councils, Rhymney and Tredegar Community Councils, the Members of Parliament for the local constituencies, the local authority associations, the police authority for the area and political parties to inform them of our intention to conduct the review and to request their preliminary views. We invited the County Borough Councils to submit suggestions for changes to the

boundary. We also publicised our intention to conduct the review in local newspapers circulating in the area and asked the councils to display a number of public notices.

### **3. DRAFT PROPOSALS**

3.1 We received representations from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council and Rhymney Community Council. These representations were taken into consideration and summarised in our Draft Proposals published on 13 August 1999.

3.2 Our Draft Proposals recommended that the boundary between Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly be realigned so as to include the whole of the Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate within the area of Blaenau Gwent. The proposed change to the boundary was shown on the map within the report.

3.3 Copies of the Draft Proposals were sent to all the councils, bodies and individuals referred to in paragraph 2.2 seeking their views. A copy was also sent to anyone who had submitted preliminary comments. By public notice we also invited any other organisation or person with an interest in the review to submit their views. Copies of the Draft Proposals were made available for inspection at the offices of Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly County Borough Councils and the Commission and were also deposited at the offices of Gwent Constabulary.

### **4. SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT PROPOSALS**

4.1 We received representations from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council; Caerphilly County Borough Council; Brian Hancock AM; Peter Law AM; the Police Federation of England and Wales; and a representative of one of the companies based on the industrial estate. All of these representations were considered carefully before formulating our proposals.

4.2 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council said that they supported the Commission's proposal to include the whole of the Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate into the area of Blaenau Gwent.

4.3 Caerphilly County Borough Council said that they were opposed to the Commission's proposal to include the whole of the Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate into the area of Blaenau Gwent. They expressed concern over the potential loss of Business Rate should legislation change in future. They said that, while the majority of the area of the industrial estate lay within Blaenau Gwent, 60% of the industrial units lay within Caerphilly. The Council recognised that the division of the industrial estate between two authorities might not be in the interests of effective and convenient local government, but argued that there would be equal merit in re-aligning the boundary to include the whole industrial estate within Caerphilly. They asked the Commission to consider the re-alignment of the boundary to include the whole industrial estate within Caerphilly as an alternative proposal.

4.4 Brian Hancock AM said that he considered it to be logical that the Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate should be served by one Local Authority.

4.5 Peter Law AM said that he welcomed the Commission's proposals which he regarded as a common sense solution to a long running problem.

4.6 Police Federation of England and Wales said the Commission's proposed re-alignment of the boundary would simply formalise existing policing arrangements in the area.

4.7 Mr A Wardle, writing on behalf of Ashtenne Investments Ltd., said that his company, as owners of Units 6, 9 – 12 and 17 – 22 on the Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate, fully supported the Commission's proposed re-alignment of the boundary. The company believed that the maintenance of roads and sewers within the industrial estate would be better managed under one authority. They also believed that having the whole industrial estate under a single local authority would lead to a streamlining of both planning and grant assistance applications which in turn would lead to an enhancement of the economic development process.

## **5. ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The general consensus of opinion expressed in the representations received by the Commission is in agreement with the Commission's conclusion that the existing boundary between Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly is anomalous, principally because it divides Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate between two local authorities. In addition, the existing boundary does not follow clearly defined features as it runs through the industrial estate.

5.2 Before publishing our Draft Proposals we undertook a site visit to the industrial estate in order to review the position generally, and to consider Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's proposal for the realignment of the boundary, the effect of which would be to transfer the whole of the industrial estate to Blaenau Gwent. We found the proposed boundary to be clearly defined as it follows a fence which is aligned north-south along the western perimeter of the industrial estate, joining the road to the immediate south of the industrial estate.

5.3 We have considered the subsequent suggestion from Caerphilly County Borough Council that there is equal merit for the transfer of the whole of the industrial estate into Caerphilly as for its transfer into Blaenau Gwent. The Commission have considered alternative possibilities for realignment as suggested, but as will be apparent from the map at Appendix 1, the realignment proposed by Caerphilly County Borough Council would be likely to involve the transfer of a very substantial area from Blaenau Gwent. Indeed it is not clear where the line could conveniently be drawn, and we note that Caerphilly County Borough Council made no suggestions as to the realignment. Having regard to the difficulty of drawing the line, and the matters contained in the Assessment in our draft proposals, including the fact that the sole entrance to the industrial estate and the majority of roads within the industrial estate were in Blaenau Gwent, we are satisfied that the balance is overwhelmingly in favour of the realignment proposed in our draft proposals.

## **6. PROPOSALS**

Having considered all of the evidence available to us we propose that, in the interests of effective and convenient local government, the boundary between the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent and the County Borough of Caerphilly in the area of Tafarnaubach should be realigned so as to include the whole of the Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate within the area of Blaenau Gwent. The proposed change to the boundary is shown in blue on the map at Appendix 1.

Please note that due to technical and copyright difficulties the map at Appendix 1 has not been included with this version of the report. A copy of the report with the map can be obtained by [contacting the Commission](#).

## **7. CONSEQUENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

7.1 This report details our proposal for change to the boundary between the County Boroughs of Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly. In considering the change to the boundary it was also necessary for us to take account of the effects on the electoral arrangements for the Community Councils and the County Borough Councils which would result from this change.

7.2 We draw attention to the fact that one private property to the south of the western end of the industrial estate would be transferred from Caerphilly to Blaenau Gwent if the proposed boundary were adopted. This would require a change to be made to the electoral registers of the relevant councils but would not affect the electoral arrangements for the Community or County Borough Councils.

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

8.1 We wish to express our gratitude to the principal councils for their assistance during the course of the review and to all bodies and persons who made representations to us.

## **9. RESPONSES TO THIS REPORT**

9.1 Having completed our review of part of the boundary between the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent and the County Borough of Caerphilly in the area of Tafarnaubach and submitted our recommendations to the National Assembly for Wales, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Act.

9.2 It now falls to the National Assembly for Wales, if it thinks fit, to implement them with or without modifications by means of an Order or to direct the Commission to conduct a further review. Such an Order will not be made earlier than a period of six weeks from the date that the Commission's recommendations are submitted to the National Assembly for Wales.

9.3 Any further representations concerning the matters in the report should be addressed to the National Assembly for Wales. They should be made as soon as possible, and in any event not later than six weeks from the date that the Commission's recommendations are submitted to the National Assembly for Wales. Representations should be addressed to:

*Local Government Modernisation 2 Division*

*National Assembly for Wales*

*Cathays Park*

*Cardiff*

*CF10 3NQ*

PROFESSOR E SUNDERLAND OBE LL MA PhD LLD FIBiol (Chairman)

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