

Comments:

While recognising the difficult task facing the Boundary Commission for Wales (BCW) as a result of the reduction in seats, and we also acknowledge that the Commission will not consider representation on the statutory electorate range, it must be recognised that the electorate figures used as of December 2015 no longer reflect the current electorate which have increased due to the number of electors registering for the EU Referendum. The current electorate for the existing Llanelli Constituency is 1,817 more than what is quoted in the BCW's initial proposals and the current electorate for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr Constituency is 967 more than what is quoted in the BCW's initial proposals.

From the point of view of the administration of elections, there are a number of concerns. The next Parliamentary Elections are scheduled to take place on Thursday 7 May 2020. The next scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner Elections will also take place in 2020 and are highly likely to be combined with the Parliamentary Election. If this review is implemented at the 2020 Parliamentary Election it will result in different boundaries for Parliamentary and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections. The complex combination of polls here is challenging enough due to different voting systems (First past the post for Parliamentary and Supplementary Vote for Police and Crime) and different franchise (i.e. EU Citizens cannot vote at Parliamentary Elections but can at Police and Crime Commissioner Elections) without the additional confusion to electors of voting on different boundaries.

This will require strong project management and close working and cooperation with the City and County of Swansea who will manage the Police and Crime Commissioner elections. For example who will sort out polling stations, appoint and train staff, prepare ballot boxes and issue and receipt postal votes. At present Carmarthenshire and Swansea operate different software and hence the risk of transfer of data must be considered. All these issues can be managed but it makes the conduct of elections much more complex and brings increased risks and associated costs.

Llanelli and Lliw (Llanelli a Lliw)

We support the name of Llanelli and Lliw but recommend that the BCW consider the primary name being Llanelli a Lliw (Llanelli and Lliw).

Although we acknowledge that no existing constituency will remain unchanged under the initial proposals we are of the view that Llanelli should not be amended to cross over county boundaries. Many organisations cover the whole of Carmarthenshire e.g. Dyfed Police Authority (Police and Crime Commissioner), Hywel Dda Health Board, Coroner Services and of the course the Council itself. This will cause enormous difficulties in practical electoral terms and in the effective delivery of local services to citizens. It will also cause significant electoral administrative challenges and complexity.

With the 1,817 additional electors in this constituency, this constituency would be over 5% above the UKEG. We strongly recommend that the Mawr ward at least be not included. We also consider that the Llangyfelach Ward should also remain in Swansea West, but appreciate that this would mean a much larger Swansea West constituency. If Mawr is excluded then the UKEG for Llanelli will drop to +3.6%. If both Mawr and Llangyfelach are excluded then the UKEG is -1.4%. However, see below.

Caerfyrddin (Carmarthenshire)

We do not support the name of the new Constituency as it does not adequately describe the electoral wards contained in the proposed Parliamentary boundaries. The County of Carmarthenshire covers the whole county, not just half! We therefore suggest that it be re-named Carmarthenshire North.

We do support the Western wards of Carmarthenshire coming into the new Constituency. They are part of the County of Carmarthenshire and all have strong links with Carmarthen Town. We do not however support the Boundary Commission's initial proposal for the electoral wards of Llangeler and Cenarth to move out of the County. This is a great opportunity to have all our County wards in the rural North and West of our County together in one constituency. To achieve the correct UKEG, we would recommend that Llangyndeyrn go into the Llanelli and Lliw constituency. Having all our 'Northern wards together in this way would lead to a much simpler and easier electoral administrative constituency and contain all wards within the County. It would also give an electorate of 74,902, with a UKEG of just +0.4%.

The impact on Llanelli and Lliw, of including Llangyndeyrn and excluding Mawr and Llangyfelach would have a UKEG of +1.9%.

Both our new constituencies would then primarily fall within the County. The Carmarthenshire North totally and the Llanelli and Lliw with only 4 (not 6) wards from Swansea, all of which are very close to the County boundary and probably already look to Llanelli for many amenities, including retail and leisure.