



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

**Title: Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales –
Electoral Review**

Date: 8 December 2010

**By: Carl Sargeant, Minister for Social Justice and Local
Government**

Under directions issued by my predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales is conducting a review of the electoral arrangements in each County and County Borough Council. They have a duty to conduct such reviews at intervals of not less than 10 and not more than 15 years and to consider making proposals to Welsh Ministers for a change to those electoral arrangements.

To date the Commission has completed the electoral reviews of seven local authorities and has published the final reports for these areas. I will be considering the proposals for each area in due course.

The directions included a requirement for the Commission to complete all the reviews by June 2011, with the intention that this would allow for orders to be made in good time for candidates to be selected and for local authority registration officers to make necessary adjustments to the electoral register in good time for the local elections of 2012.

Despite allocating adequate resources to complete the reviews within the timescales specified in the directions the Commission has fallen considerably behind schedule. I have over the past year re-iterated to the commission the importance of delivering to these timescales. However, it has now become clear that the Commission will be unable to meet this date in respect of a number of counties.

In considering the reports I do have before me I also have concerns about their consistency of the reports which have been issued and it is clear that in a number of cases considerable amendments would be needed in order to protect the link between councillors and the communities they represent, which I consider to be extremely important. Concern has also been expressed about administrative errors which have occurred in the process of carrying out these reviews.

In light of these issues, in particular the delays in producing reports for a number of counties I have concluded that I will not make any orders in respect of the boundary reviews for any local authorities in Wales take effect for the 2012 elections. I do not wish to create a situation where some local authorities will conduct elections in 2012 under new arrangements and others under existing arrangements because of the imbalance inherent in such a situation. I am making this announcement now to provide certainty to local government and others concerned with the electoral process.

Clearly the fact that the Boundary Commission has failed to deliver this programme of reviews consistently and within the agreed timescales gives me cause for concern. I have therefore instructed my officials to establish an independent review to identify why these failures have occurred and identify actions that can be taken to ensure that the programme can be delivered efficiently and to a high standard in time for the 2016 elections