

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES



Comisiwn Ffiniau
Llywodraeth Leol
i Gymru



Local Government
Boundary Commission
for Wales

ANNUAL REPORT
2007/2008

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES
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Chair's Foreword

The main focus of the Commission's work during the last year has been the continuation of preparations for the forthcoming Review of principal authorities. This has involved in the main endeavouring to ensure that anomalies in community areas have been addressed prior to the start of the main Review.

The Commission has been assisting the principal authorities by carrying out community reviews on their behalf under Directions from the Welsh Assembly Government. The requirement for these formal Directions is a time-consuming and cumbersome one and the Commission hopes that the National Assembly might be able to use its new powers to amend the legislation to streamline this process.

The details of the reviews are set out in this report, but I must emphasise once again that our overriding objective in every case is to bring forward proposals that are in the interests of effective and convenient local government and which are arrived at objectively and independently. A vital part of all our work are our consultation procedures which we try to make as comprehensive as possible and as appropriate as possible to the scale of the review. We are grateful for all the representations that we receive. We consider very carefully every single one of them as we assess evidence before reaching our conclusions, although inevitably some people are sometimes disappointed by our conclusions.

During the last year, the Commission's Secretariat continued to provide Secretarial functions for the Boundary Commission for Wales and it is anticipated that it will continue to do so for the immediate future.

In conclusion, as this is the last Annual Report to which I will write the Foreword before I retire at the end of December 2008, I should like to take this opportunity to say that it has been a privilege to be a Member of the Commission since 1996 and its Chair since January 2002 and that I have been grateful for the wise and always-helpful contributions of my fellow Commissioners during that time and for the support, loyalty and hard work of the staff of the Secretariat.



Mrs. SUSAN SMITH LLB
Chair

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission

1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) was established in June 1974 under the terms of Section 53 of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act). The statutory functions of the Commission are specified in Sections 54 to 78 of the 1972 Act as amended by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 (the 1994 Act). Schedule 8 to the 1972 Act makes provision for the Commission's constitution and proceedings.

1.2 The purpose of the Commission is:

To review local government areas and electoral arrangements in Wales, with a view to considering whether or not to make proposals to the National Assembly for Wales for effecting changes which appear to the Commission to be desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government.

Membership

1.3 Membership of the Commission during 2007-08 was:

Mrs Susan G Smith LLB	(Chair)
Mr Dennis H Roberts BSc DMS MBCS MCMI	(Deputy Chair)
Rev Hywel Meredydd Davies BD	(Member)

The Welsh Assembly Government makes appointments to the Commission. On the 1 January 2005 the appointments of the then current Commissioners were renewed. The appointment of the Chair is for a term of 4 years and runs until 31 December 2008. The appointment of the Deputy Chair was for a term of 3 years and ran until 31 December 2007. However the appointment of the Deputy Chair was extended for a further 4 months until the process for appointing a replacement was completed. During 2007-08 The Deputy Chair also served as the Chair of the Audit Committee. Rev Hywel Meredydd Davies was appointed Commission Member on 1 January 2007 for a term of 3 years until 31 December 2009. The Commission must have at least one Welsh speaker and Mr. Roberts and Rev Davies fulfilled this requirement during 2007-08.

Commissioners currently hold membership of other public bodies. Mrs Smith is a Member of the Boundary Commission for Wales, Chair of the Pembrokeshire County Council Standards Committee and the Independent Adjudicator for Local Authorities in Wales (under Local Government and Housing Act 1989). The Rev H M Davies is Chair of Tearfund in Wales and Menter Môn and Vice Chair of the Anglesey Local Health Board. He is also a Member of the Sports Council for Wales, the North Wales Court Board, Energywatch Wales Lay Committee and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

Commission meetings are held as often as the programme of work dictates. It is the Commission's normal practice to visit the locality of reviews, especially in respect of area (boundary) reviews. In the interests of efficiency, site inspections are combined with Commission meetings whenever possible. Nine meetings were held during 2007-08.

The Auditor General for Wales is the Commission's external auditor, while contracts exist for the provision of internal audit, legal, accountancy, translation and printing services.

The Secretariat

- 1.4 The Commission's secretariat is located in Caradog House, 1-6 St. Andrews Place, Cardiff. At the beginning of the year there were 6 members of staff. The posts of Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Finance Manager are occupied by direct employees of the Commission. The posts of Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Finance Manager are all full time. The 3 other members of staff are civil servants seconded from the Welsh Assembly Government and Companies House: 1 working full time and 2 working part-time.
- 1.5 From 1 January 2002 the Commission's Secretariat undertook the responsibility of providing a Secretariat to the Boundary Commission for Wales for its Fifth General Review of the Parliamentary constituencies in Wales under a Memorandum of Agreement between the Commission, the National Assembly for Wales, the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions and the Office of National Statistics. The Boundary Commission for Wales' Fifth General Review started in December 2002 and was completed on 31st January 2005. It is anticipated that the Commission's Secretariat will continue to provide this function for the foreseeable future. The Sponsor Department for the Boundary Commission for Wales is the Ministry of Justice. A new Memorandum of Agreement between the Welsh Assembly Government and the Ministry of Justice was drafted during 2007-08.

Statutory Duties

- 1.6 The main duties of the Commission are:

Local Government Areas

- i) To keep under review all principal areas in Wales for the purpose of considering whether or not to propose to the Welsh Assembly Government changes appearing to the Commission desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government;
- ii) To consider requests for reviews from local authorities;
- iii) To consider reports made by principal councils in respect of community area reviews carried out by them and make recommendations to the Welsh Assembly Government.

Electoral Arrangements

- iv) Under the provisions of the new section 64 inserted into the 1972 Act by Section 6 of the 1994 Act, as soon as practicable after the ordinary election of councillors for any of the Welsh principal areas held in 1995 the Commission were required to:

- a) Review the electoral arrangements for those areas with a view to considering future electoral arrangements; and
 - b) Formulate proposals for those arrangements; and
- v) Not less than ten or more than fifteen years after the completion of the initial review and thereafter, at similar intervals, to review the electoral arrangements for every principal area in Wales.

Directions

- vi) The Welsh Assembly Government may direct the Commission to conduct a review of Wales as a whole, or of any one or more local government areas or parts of such areas in Wales.

Review Procedure

1.7 Section 60 of the 1972 Act lays down procedural guidelines to be followed when undertaking all reviews. The basic stages of a review are:

- i) An announcement of the review's commencement in which initial suggestions and comments are invited by a specified date;
- ii) The publication of the Commission's draft proposals when comments on them are similarly invited by a specified date; and
- iii) The publication of final proposals after which any further comments must be addressed to the Welsh Assembly Government.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Commission are sponsored by the Local Government Policy Division of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Commission are subject to periodic Policy Reviews that provide medium term strategic and policy guidelines for the Commission's annual plans. The last strategic planning period began with a Policy Review of the Commission undertaken by the National Assembly for Wales in 2001.

Targets

- 2.2 Directions from the Welsh Assembly Government to the Commission to undertake area reviews contain directed deadlines, which are set following consideration of the complexity of each review. The Commission aims to complete area reviews undertaken at the request of local authorities within twelve months.
- 2.3 The procedures to be followed when undertaking a review are defined by statute, requiring the Commission to inform and consult widely and take into account representations before making any final proposals to the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 2.4 There are no statutory time periods for the consultation or other stages of the procedures, which are left to the discretion of the Commission. The Commission have given careful consideration to the need to provide adequate time for the views of local authorities and other interested persons to be submitted. Targets are set within the twelve months of a review for the stages of publicity and consultation, the production of draft and final reports and the time needed for assessing the issues involved. However, the Commission occasionally find it necessary to take into consideration particular circumstances and, unless directed deadlines apply, are flexible in adherence to targets.

3. ACTIVITY IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR 2006-07

Community Reviews

- 3.1 The Commission completed their review of the boundary between the Communities of Blaenhonddan and Dyffryn Clydach in the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot, publishing their Report and Proposals in April 2006.
- 3.2 The Commission were directed by the National Assembly for Wales to conduct a review of communities in the County Borough of Wrexham in June 2006. The Commission commenced this review in July 2006 and Draft Proposals were published in March 2007.
- 3.3 The Commission were directed by the National Assembly for Wales to conduct a review of communities in the County of Isle of Anglesey in September 2006. The Commission commenced this review in November 2006.
- 3.4 The Commission were directed by the National Assembly for Wales to conduct a review of communities in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff in September 2006. The Commission commenced this review in January 2007.
- 3.5 In December 2006 the Commission submitted their Report and Proposals to the National Assembly in respect of their review of the recommendations made by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council following the Council's review of Communities in their area.
- 3.6 The Commission also commenced a review of the recommendations made by Powys County Council following the Council's review of Communities in their area.

Community Ward Boundary Project

- 3.5 The Commission continued to convert the scanned community boundaries into mapping data 'in house' during 2006-07.

4. THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION DURING 2007-08

Principal Area Reviews

- 4.1 The Commission commenced a review of the boundary between the County of Powys and the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil in July 2007, publishing their Draft Proposals in January 2008.

Community Reviews

- 4.2 The Commission completed their review of the community boundaries in the County Borough of Wrexham, publishing their Report and Proposals in September 2007. The Commission received a Direction from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government dated 15 March 2008 to conduct a further review of specific community boundaries in the County Borough of Wrexham by 30 September 2008. The review began in 27 March 2008.
- 4.3 The Commission published Draft Proposals for their review of communities in the County of Isle of Anglesey in July 2007.
- 4.4 The Commission published Draft Proposals for their reviews of communities in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff in August 2007. Report and Proposals for the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff were published in February 2008.
- 4.5 During 2007-08 the Commission were directed by the Welsh Assembly Government to conduct reviews of communities in the County / County Boroughs of Caerphilly, Conwy, Bridgend and Swansea. The review of communities in Caerphilly commenced in October 2007, Conwy in October 2007, Bridgend in November 2007 and Swansea in January 2008.
- 4.6 Principal councils are responsible for undertaking reviews of community areas and community electoral arrangements. In July 2007 the Commission submitted their Report and Proposals to the Welsh Assembly Government in respect of their review of the recommendations made by Powys County Council following that Council's review of communities in their area.

Community Ward Boundary Project

- 4.7 The Commission continued to convert the scanned community boundaries into mapping data 'in house' during 2007-08 and it is expected that this work will be completed during 2008-09.

5. CORPORATE MANAGEMENT: POLICIES AND PRACTICE

Management Statement, Financial Memorandum and Codes

- 5.1 A Management Statement and associated Financial Memorandum describe the relationship between the Commission and the National Assembly for Wales and require the submission of Annual Operational Plans and Annual Reports to the Welsh Assembly Government for the purposes of planning, budgeting and assessing performance. Quarterly liaison meetings and an annual review meeting are held with the sponsor division of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Commission had their annual meeting with the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government of the National Assembly for Wales on 17 September 2007.
- 5.2 A Code of Best Practice for Commissioners has been adopted and a Register of the direct or indirect pecuniary interests of Commissioners is open for public inspection. Access can be arranged by contacting the Secretary at the Commission's offices. There is a similar code in relation to staff.
- 5.3 The Commission meets as an Audit Committee, chaired by the Deputy Chair of the Commission. During the year the Audit Committee met three times.
- 5.4 Working practices have been adopted which accord with the principles of openness, consultation and helpfulness. For example, the Commission give widespread publicity to their intention to hold each review and write to and visit the local authority concerned to discuss the review and invite their initial comments. For each review the Commission issue press releases on their draft and final proposals and sufficient copies of reports are supplied to enable their free distribution to all members of principal and community councils affected by the proposals and local libraries. A number of copies are also available for local residents on request. The Commission's web site: www.lgbc-wales.gov.uk gives information about the Commission, the progress of reviews and access to previous reports.
- 5.5 In October 2007 the Commission held their tenth Annual Open Meeting, on this occasion in the Copthorne Hotel in The Vale of Glamorgan. The guest speakers at the meeting were Brian Gibbons AM (Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, National Assembly for Wales) and John Maitland-Evans (Chief Executive, The Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council).

Budget and Audit

- 5.6 The net operating cost for the year amounted to £376,293 with Grant-in-aid received from the Welsh Assembly Government amounting to £372,461, which was within the grant-in-aid allocation for the year of £406,000. The Commission is committed to achieving value for money when purchasing goods and services.
- 5.7 To ensure efficiency and value for money a comprehensive set of desk instructions relating to systems and procedures is in place. The Commission's internal auditors were the Internal Audit Service of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Auditor General for Wales has undertaken the external audit of the Commission's finances.

Welsh Language Scheme

- 5.8 The Commission wish to make it clear that the public can deal with them in Welsh. In July 1998, the Commission adopted their Welsh Language Scheme in accordance with the provisions of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Schemes (Public Bodies) Order 1996. The Commission have now issued their eighth annual report to the Welsh Language Board on the operation of the scheme. In summary, the report confirms that the Commission are complying with the measures, timetable and targets set out in their scheme. Evidence of the commitment to **the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, the Commission will treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality** is contained in the bilingual publication of all the reports and attendant publicity referred to in this Annual Report. However the scheme also contains many other detailed measures in support of the principle and a copy of the full report will be supplied on request or may be accessed on the Commission's web site.

Training and Information Technology

- 5.9 The Commission is part of the Welsh Assembly Government's MERLIN partnership which has continued to provide the majority of the Commission's IT requirements both hardware and software. This has increased the Commission's IT efficiency and reduced the Commission's own exposure to the risk of system failure.
- 5.10 Staff development training courses have been attended during the year.

Complaints Procedure

- 5.11 The Commission has a Complaints Procedure whereby complaints may be made (by letter, e-mail or telephone) by contacting the Commission. Information on how complaints are handled can be found within the Commission's Complaints Procedure document, which can be viewed on the Commission's web site (www.lgbc-wales.gov.uk) or can be obtained from the Commission at the address below:

**The Secretary
Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales
Caradog House
1 - 6 St Andrews Place
CARDIFF
CF10 3BE**

**Phone: 029 20395031
Fax: 029 20395250
E Mail: lgbc.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Web Site: www.lgbc-wales.gov.uk**

6. SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES

SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

This Financial Statement provides a summary of the accounts of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) for the financial year ending 31 March 2008. It does not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the results and state of affairs of the Commission. For further information the full annual accounts and auditor's report on those accounts should be consulted. A copy of the audited accounts, which contain the detailed information required by law and under best practice guidelines, can be obtained, free of charge, from the Finance Manager, Caradog House, 1-6 St. Andrews Place, Cardiff, CF10 3BE.

Statutory Background

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) was established under Section 53 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the purposes of keeping under review the areas and electoral arrangements of local government in Wales.

From 1 April 1995 the Commission became an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body funded by Grant-in-aid from the former Welsh Office and after 1 July 1999, an Assembly Sponsored Public Body (ASPB). When the Government of Wales Act 2006 came into effect on 25 May 2007 the Commission became an Assembly Government Sponsored Body (AGSB).

Review of the Year and Future Developments

Community reviews were the major part of the Commission's work during the year. As detailed in the Annual Report, the Commission completed their review of the community boundaries in the County Borough of Wrexham, publishing their Report and Proposals in September 2007. The Commission published Draft Proposals for their reviews of communities in the County of Isle of Anglesey and the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff (which commenced during 2006-07) in July 2007 and August 2007 respectively. Report and Proposals for the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff were published in February 2008. During 2007-08 the Commission were directed by the Welsh Assembly Government to conduct reviews of communities in the County / County Boroughs of Caerphilly, Conwy, Bridgend and Swansea. The review of communities in the Caerphilly was commenced in October 2007, Conwy in October 2007, Bridgend in November 2007 and Swansea in January 2008.

The Commission received a Direction from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government dated 15 March 2008 to conduct a further review of specific community boundaries in the County Borough of Wrexham by 30 September 2008. The review began in 27 March 2008.

Principal councils are responsible for undertaking reviews of community areas and community electoral arrangements. In July 2007 the Commission submitted their Report and Proposals to the Welsh Assembly Government in respect of their review of the recommendations made by Powys County Council following that Council's review of communities in their area.

The Commission also commenced a review of the boundary between the County of Powys and the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil in July 2007, publishing their Draft Proposals in January 2008.

Further reviews of electoral arrangements will be dependent upon any directions, which may be issued by the Welsh Assembly Government or requests from principal councils. It is expected that the Commission will commence their next all-Wales review of electoral arrangements for principal councils by 2008. The increase in the Commission's workload resulting from this review will necessitate an increase in Secretariat staff.

The Commission also have an ongoing obligation to keep under review the areas of principal councils and to give consideration to any recommendations made by principal councils in respect of community area reviews undertaken by them. During 2008-09 the Commission will complete those community reviews, which commenced in 2007-08, and it is also expected that the Commission will undertake further work in respect of community reviews for other principal councils.

Commission Membership

The Commission Members throughout 2007-08 were:

Mrs Susan G Smith LLB	(Chair)
Mr Dennis H Roberts BSc DMS MBCS MCMI	(Deputy Chair)
Rev Hywel Meredydd Davies BD	(Member)

Report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales on the Summary Financial Statements

I have examined the summary financial statements of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales statutory financial statements set out below/on pages 12 to 168.

Respective responsibilities of the Accounting Officer and auditor

The Accounting Officer is responsible for preparing the Annual Report. My responsibility is to report my opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statements with the statutory financial statements. I also read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider the implications for my report if I become aware of any misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summary financial statements.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my work in accordance with Bulletin 1999/6 'The auditor's statement on the summary financial statements' issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom.

Opinion

In my opinion the summary financial statements are consistent with the statutory financial statements of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales for the year ended 31 March 2008 on which I have issued an unqualified opinion.

Jeremy Colman
Auditor General for Wales
20 June 2008

Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

OPERATING COST STATEMENT
for the year ended 31 March 2008

	2008	2007
	£	£
EXPENDITURE		
Staff costs	209,462	173,813
Depreciation	6,464	11,139
Notional cost of capital charge	223	378
Other operating charges	160,385	154,934
Gross Operating Costs	<u>376,534</u>	<u>340,264</u>
Interest received	(273)	(151)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	-
Reversal of notional cost of capital charge	(223)	(378)
Amount surrendered to the Welsh Assembly Government	255	117
Net Operating Costs transferred to the General Reserve	<u><u>376,293</u></u>	<u><u>339,852</u></u>

All activities are classed as continuing

STATEMENT OF RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES
for the year ended 31 March 2008

	2008	2007
	£	£
Revaluation of Fixed Assets	-	-
Total recognised losses for the year	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

Note: The Commission has no gains or losses other than the net operating cost.

BALANCE SHEET
as at 31 March 2008

	2008		2007	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Fixed Assets		17,219		14,576
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors and prepayments	1,421		1,612	
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>15,587</u>		<u>14,397</u>	
	17,008		16,009	
CREDITORS				
Amounts falling due within one year		<u>(29,632)</u>		<u>(22,413)</u>
NET CURRENT LIABILITIES		(12,624)		(6,404)
TOTAL NET ASSETS		<u><u>4,595</u></u>		<u><u>8,172</u></u>
FINANCED BY:				
General Reserve		4,595		8,172
Government Grant Reserve		-		-
GOVERNMENT FUNDS		<u><u>4,595</u></u>		<u><u>8,172</u></u>

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
for the year ended 31 March 2008

	2008 £	2007 £
Net cash outflow from operating activities	(362,437)	(325,820)
Returns on investment	273	151
Surrender of bank interest to Welsh Assembly Government	(255)	(117)
Capital expenditure	(9,107)	(4,261)
Financing		
Welsh Assembly Government funding Grant-in-Aid	372,716	334,626
INCREASE IN CASH	<u>1,190</u>	<u>4,579</u>
<hr/>		
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds		
Increase in cash for the period	1,190	4,579
Net funds at 1 April	14,397	9,818
Net funds at 31 March	<u>15,587</u>	<u>14,397</u>

NOTES TO THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. Accounting Conventions

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2007-08 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FReM follows UK generally accepted accounting practice for companies (UK GAAP) to the extent that it is meaningful and appropriate to the public sector. The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention.

2. Financial Results

The net operating cost for the year amounted to £376,293 (2006-07; £339,852) and this has been transferred to the general reserve. Grant-in-aid received from the Welsh Assembly Government amounted to £372,716 (2006-07; £334,626) and this has been credited direct to the general reserve.

3. Staff and Members' Costs

	2008	2007
	£	£
Commission Members' Remuneration	14,324	15,587
Salaries		
Directly employed	109,900	94,055
Inward secondment	40,031	27,926
Employers National Insurance		
Directly employed (including Commission Members)	12,420	10,634
Inward secondment	2,081	1,302
Other Pension costs		
Directly employed	23,392	19,524
Inward secondment	7,314	4,785
Total	<u>209,462</u>	<u>173,813</u>
Average number of staff employed during the financial year	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>
Directly employed	3	3
Inward secondment	3	3

The emolument of the Chair of the Commission was £5,782 (2006-07: £4,840). The other Members received less than £5,000 each. Further details of remuneration for senior staff and Commission Members can be found in the remuneration report to the full annual accounts.

4. Post Balance Sheet Events

At the date of signing these accounts there were no post balance sheet events to report.

Edward Lewis
Secretary and Accounting Officer
12 June 2008