



Caerphilly

Comments (published, complete) received during the initial consultation period

DBCC-6 Member of the public

Separate the borough back into Caerphilly and Islwyn. Caerphilly Council only cares about Caerphilly town, the rest of the borough are left to go into ruin.

DBCC-8 Member of the public

Having two small local community councils is also very wasteful. Both Risca East and Risca Town community councils have to employ a clerk from a relatively budget. I assume both these councils will be merged?

DBCC-13 Local councillor or other elected official

Dear Sirs The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru reviews the electoral arrangements and ward boundaries every 12 years, so we are told. However, the last time Caerphilly Ward boundaries were reviewed was 2020. Only five years ago! At that time, the Commission proposed a merger between the Ynysddu and Crosskeys Wards. This was strongly contested by residents of the Ynysddu Ward. A handwritten 1034 named petition was handed to the then First Minister Mark Drakeford and Member of the public letters from residents, community groups and the Lower Sirhowy Valley Communities Partnership were sent. Ultimately the decision was rescinded, and the merger did not take place. There is great concern among residents that again the proposal to merge Ynysddu and Crosskeys Wards will re-surface. On paper, it seems reasonable, however, paper and maps are flat, they do not consider mountains, roads, bus routes and two completely different communities, the Sirhowy valley and the Ebbw Valley, each with their own Member of the public agendas and issues. Looking in the opposite direction (north of Ynysddu Ward) we are looking at Pontllanfraith Ward. Again, a totally different very busy Ward with three Councillors, who I believe would not welcome merger with any part of the Ynysddu Ward. There is a huge workload in the Ynysddu Ward as there are several large issues which take an enormous amount of time for whoever are elected as two representatives of the Ward. Ty Llwyd Quarry, known nationwide as a site which had contaminated industrial refuse (including PCB's) dumped there in the 1970 by local and international companies – still to be cleaned up! There is also an unwanted controversial Recycling Factory in the middle of the Ward and a pending Open Cast Mine which is being strongly contested by residents. These are issues which will not go away any time soon and are in addition to the usually issues that all Councillors have in their Wards. We, Cllr Janine Reed and Cllr Jan Jones, are two local people, who now represent the Ynysddu Ward. If the proposal to merge is reinstated, future candidates, who want to represent their community, would be faced with an additional electoral area of which they have no knowledge or historical links. Localism means trusting elected representatives to know how best to meet local needs and then holding them to account through the ballot box. To avoid a well-meaning repeat of the Commissions last proposal, we respectfully suggest that you consider your Electoral Reviews: Policy and Practice 2025, Considerations for a Review of Principal Area Electoral Arrangements : 'When carrying out an electoral review the Commission is required by Section 30 of the 2013 Act to have regard to the following factors': •

Special geographical considerations, including in particular the size shape and accessibility of an electoral ward; and • Any local ties (Including local ties connected to the use of the Welsh



language) that would be broken by changes to the electoral arrangement in the area. Our valley is a family with the villages of Wyllie, Ynysddu, Cwmfelinfach, Brynawel and Wattsville which are all closely linked through business, sports clubs, an industrial estate, outlying farms, community partnership, religious institutions, schools, youth groups, doctor and police surgeries, country park and tourism. We are close communities who identify with each other. The Ynysddu Ward is a proud community that has stood firm when challenged by authority and we would ask that you do not consider any change in the Boundary of the Ward. Kind regards Cllr Janine Reed and Cllr Jan Jones

DBCC-21 Local councillor or other elected official

Good afternoon, In regards the consultation that closes today I would like to make representations that the Blackwood ward remain as is in regards the amount of County Councillors. Currently there are 3 seats, and we are already over the threshold by 11 percent on the way to a 4-seat ward. I ask you to consider this when making representations for change. Regards George

DBCC-22 Local councillor or other elected official

Dear Sir or Madam, Please accept this, my representation for the Caerphilly Electoral Review 2025, specifically with respect to the Wards of Risca East & Risca West. To offer some context with respect to myself - I moved to Risca in 1962 (aged 2), brought up on Ty-Sign estate. In 1984 I married and settled in Pontymister, so as a resident of 63 years I believe I am well qualified to make this representation. During this time I have seen many changes, e.g. I recall when Risca had its own (RUDC) council and the local people, wherever they lived, e.g. Fernlea, Ty-Sign, Ty-Isaf etc, if asked where they lived they invariably responded, 'in Risca'. And this still applies today, in fact (politicians aside) I have never heard anyone make reference to Risca as East or West, just plain 'Risca'. In the 60's with Ty-Sign being a satellite estate built for the workers of the new (Llanwern) Steelworks (as were many other estates; Bettws (Newport), Bulwark (Chepstow) & Caldicot to name a few) people came into the area from all over South Wales, be it from Llanelli & Swansea in the West, or from Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Markham in the East (list not exhaustive, just some examples) it was truly cosmopolitan Welsh and 'Risca' thrived as a result of this influx. In previous Boundary Commission consultations I have commented on Risca, the fact that the community is split across two wards the town remains resilient (I will put some context on this 'split' comment later). I also note that the recent review of Caerphilly communities, the recommendations of which have now been approved at WG level. With respect to Risca (to abolition the town of Risca West and the community of Risca East thus utilising the areas to form the new community of Risca) this goes a long way to reuniting our community and is therefore welcomed. With the recommendations coming into force in May 2027, with the Commission's considerations for its review of Caerphilly's principal areas it is my very strong view that a similar recommendation should be reached, to unite Risca at county borough level thus mirroring the new 'community of Risca', and I make the case thus: Boundary wise Risca was split in two following a previous review the outcome of which local people have never understood and still don't. With reference to my earlier comment re the split, If I say that it fractured our community it must however be understood that such is our resilience and care for each other as Member of the public that the fracture is not visible, it is by way of a boundary line only, nothing more. For those who would argue otherwise, e.g. talk of pockets of deprivation I say this. As in most communities there are of course pockets of deprivation but in the case of Risca many have been created (in the main) by Caerphilly Council policy. Not long following its inception (1996) decisions were taken which included the utilisation of an area of Ty-Sign to house people from outside Risca. Not only did this dilute community cohesion it created much consternation as it creating problems of varying degrees of magnitude, nonetheless Risca continues to be a very friendly and warm place such is our resilience. I stood for council and was elected in 2017 to represent 'Risca West'. That said I am proud to be known locally as a 'Ty-Sign' boy and passionate with it. As far as a single 'community of Risca' ward is concerned, if it was formed, I would welcome the opportunity to put my name forward in the future,



to represent the whole community. As already alluded to, the East & West split has never been understood, e.g. what logic was applied to make the railway line the border? With the expansion of Risca eastwards the canal is the natural border as above (the canal) is where the expansion of Risca has taken place (Ty-Sign, Snowdon, Trynewydd, Preseli, Cadre Idris) whereas (with the border being the railway line) the East ward was set to include Herbert Avenue, Channel View, Woodview Road, Gelli Crescent etc (non-exhaustive list) all of which have no natural link to Ty-Sign, Trennewydd etc. In fact Herbert Avenue etc align naturally with old Pontymister & Risca (currently Risca West) because they are exactly that, part of old Pontymister & Risca making the boundary line totally nonsensical. If the border had been the canal the East ward would have been the smaller (two councillor) ward with the west requiring three as is. With respect to the last review of Caerphilly's ward boundaries (circa 2018-19 - as I recall) it recommended a reduction in the number of ward councillors from 73 (to 66) but following some protracted negotiations with the council 69 was finally settled on. I further understand that the current position with respect to Caerphilly councillors is for the number to sit between 62 & 68. With this in mind, this review not only offers an opportunity to reunite the community of Risca it also presents the Commission with a further opportunity, to reduce the number of councillors from five across the two current Risca wards to four in a new single community of Risca ward. As for what the Commission considers as pointers when undertaking its review, I put forward the following further points: i) With respect to the recent community review and the representations made to retain two community councils (which the Commission dismissed), in describing the area as having two distinct communities, that view only resides in the current East ward and there appeared to be little emphasis on the ethos of community. In reality, I would say that in areas of relatively small population it makes sense to align communities for social and cohesive purposes. If we consider the current Risca East & Risca West wards electorate total (8707), with the current electorate-to-councillor ratios the East councillors have a -19% variance on the county average as opposed to 2% for the West. If the wards were amalgamated and the number of councillors reduced (to 4) this ratio would equate to 2,176 electors per councillor, a variance of approx. 11% which aligns favourably with approx. 11 wards within the borough as they currently stand. This would assist the Commission in its desire to align the ratio of electors to councillors across the whole borough as far as is practicable. In terms of ratios it not only offers a fair degree of parity but also the opportunity to reduce the number of current cross ward councillors (5) by one, this making Risca a 4-member single ward going forward. ii)

With respect to geographical considerations, in terms of community alignment I have no knowledge of how the current East / West boundary was agreed upon at the time it was introduced, but the fact that WG has agreed with the recent Commission's community review recommendations it surely makes sense to follow this on to county level. This will mean that the new ward would revert back to the old Risca boundary that had been in place for many years prior to the split hence tried and tested. iii) With respect to local ties the decision to unite would also serve to re-enforce the current situation, in that most residents of Risca have continued to view it as one community. iv) Risca (as one ward, reunited) will align with the Commission's desire to use community area and ward boundaries as 'building blocks' for principal area electoral wards. v) Risca (as one ward, reunited) with four councillors will align with the Commission's desire not to exceed four councillors per ward whilst cutting one. vi) Risca (as one ward, reunited) will align with the Commission's belief that multi-member electoral wards are likely to be effective in urban areas. It is accepted that Risca has a degree of rurality within it, but that stated it is (in the main urban and) very well connected. In finality, with the 'community Risca' re-established at community level extending this concept to the principal area is logical, and as it is only reverting back to a previous position it is not novel or untried. I request that the Commission takes account of the above and concludes that Risca is reunited and returned as one single community, as most people still see it. Regards Cllr Bob Owen