

RE: Consultation – Boundary Commission’s Proposal to abolish the communities of Ysbyty Ystwyth, Ystrad Fflur and Ystrad Meurig and to merge the three areas to form a new warded community of Ystrad Fflur

Response from

Ysbyty Ystwyth (YY) Community Council

Ystrad Fflur (YFf) Community Council &

Ystrad Meurig (YM) Community Council

Representatives of the above three Community Councils express their strong opposition to the Boundary Commission’s Proposal to abolish the communities of Ysbyty Ystwyth, Ystrad Fflur and Ystrad Meurig to form a new warded community of Ystrad Fflur.

Should this Proposal be accepted, it will mean:

1. YY- reduction in number of Community Cllrs from 8 to 2
2. YFf - reduction in number of Community Cllrs from 10 to 3
3. YM - reduction in number of Community Cllrs from 8 to 2

A decrease from the twenty-six present Community Cllrs to seven, with a wide geographical area to represent can only dilute the voice of local people and democracy.

A reduction of 70% or more of the current representation within each Community Council will imply that areas of interest/expertise/ workforce/local knowledge will be lost within that community.

Having 8 or 10 elected members with a range of skills enables each Community Council to provide a variety of services for the electorate. This helps to build community cohesion and combat isolation within a socially deprived area with limited or non-existent public services e.g. public transport.

It would appear impossible for 2/3 Community Cllrs to adequately represent that community.

Furthermore, representatives of one Community Council will not possess in-depth knowledge of matters appertaining to another Community Council, which will adversely affect decision making and effective working practices. Meetings will be longer and matters appertaining to one present Community Council could appear irrelevant to the other 2 Community Councils.

Each present Community Council has its own characteristics and identity. Historically these three communities have not worked together, due to long standing social and demographic differences and cannot be envisaged in the future.

Recruiting new Community Cllrs has been challenging in the past and can only deteriorate in the future should this Proposal be realised - undertaking the role of a

Community Cllr on a voluntary basis will not deem an attractive proposition especially with the extra workload. Many present members have voiced, that they will not stand at the next election under these proposed guidelines; most are dedicated Cllrs with years of experience and local knowledge. Clerks of the Community Councils are also re-assessing their roles and fiscal savings are difficult to envisage.

Re the Precept, the money raised by the Community Council via Ceredigion County Council, will it be administered in a fair and transparent manner, under the new arrangement? The fiscal value of the Precept differs at present within each Community Council. How can this be reconciled without delivering yet another blow to council-tax payers of certain wards, at a time when they have previously experienced a significant Council Tax increase?

Concern is also expressed re the Welsh Language. The Welsh Language Commissioner aims to achieve 1million Welsh Speakers in Wales by 2050. Presently, two of the Community Councils, Ystrad Fflur and Ystrad Meurig, can conduct their meetings solely through the medium of Welsh. (minutes available in English and simultaneous translation offered where necessary)

The Welsh Language could not be represented at all under the Proposal and, if so, yet another blow to the language and culture.

We believe that the Initial Consultation re this matter had been insufficient and not publicised adequately. Engagement with County and Community Councils was limited.

We also understand that the amalgamation of Community Wards within Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire County Councils is executed on a voluntary basis. Where is the parity when arrangements within Ceredigion County Council dictate otherwise?

This Proposal is a retrograde step in local democracy with huge social, political, and cultural ramifications. Grassroots elected members of Ysbyty Ystwyth, Ystrad Meurig, and Ystrad Fflur Community Councils find it difficult to establish the rationale behind such a Proposal and are extremely disappointed.

Yours

Eleri Thomas – Clerk – on behalf of Ystrad Fflur Community Council
clercystradfflur@gmail.com

Annwen Isaac – Clerk – on behalf of Ystrad Meurig Community Council
annwen.isaac@btinternet.com

Ian Williams – Clerk – on behalf of Ysbyty Ystwyth Community Council
ian.williams06@btopenworld.com

