



DEMOCRATIC AUDIT BOUNDARY MODEL FOR WALES

Lewis Baston, June 2011

Wales bears the brunt of the reduction in House of Commons constituencies, losing a quarter of its current representation as its number of MPs falls from 40 to 30. The wider issues raised by this reduction in Welsh representation were raised in Democratic Audit's written and oral evidence to the Welsh Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons in autumn 2010, and in that Committee's well-considered report. The purpose here is to explore some of the issues of boundary-drawing and what some of the radically altered new seats could look like.

Boundary drawing in Wales poses some old and some new problems. The model Welsh seats here do something which does not happen in the model seats in England or Scotland – some of them cover parts of more than two local authorities. There are a couple of reasons for this. One is geography – without seats crossing more than one council boundary there would be some very ungainly seats in north Wales in particular. The other is to do with the history of Welsh boundaries.

Since the introduction of unitary local government in Wales, there have continued to be 'preserved counties' – shadowy outlines of the county councils set up in 1974 – which have served as the basis for allocating seats rather than the usually much smaller current local authorities. There was even a boundary change between two of these ghostly entities in the north west. Even so, these units were rather small, and this was part of the reason for the upward drift in the number of Welsh constituencies.

Fitting uncomfortably across the preserved counties is another way of cutting Wales into regions – the five Assembly regions. With only 30 seats to allocate, the easiest modelling assumption (we have no official word from the Boundary Commission for Wales) was to cross borders fairly frequently given the varying size of authorities and the pattern of settlement. The BCW may choose another approach, but any subdivisions of 30 seats may be problematic. Another issue for the BCW is to what extent to try to match up Westminster and Assembly boundaries – AM's will continue to be elected from the current boundaries.

The seats are listed here according to the approximate Assembly region in which they are located.

Approximate Assembly region	Constituencies	Pages
Mid and West Wales	Brecon & Montgomery Carmarthen Ceredigion Gwynedd & Machynlleth Llanelli Pembroke	3-6
North Wales	Anglesey & Bangor Conwy & Abergelē Denbigh Flint & Rhyl Mold & Shotton Wrexham	7-9
South Wales Central	Barry & Penarth Cardiff Central Cardiff North East Cardiff West Pontypridd & Aberdare Rhondda & Ogmore Vale of Ely	10-12
South Wales East	Blaenau Gwent & Tredegar Caerphilly Merthyr Tydfil & Ystrad Mynach Monmouth Newport Torfaen	13-14
South Wales West	Bridgend Neath & Aberavon Swansea East & Vale of Neath Swansea North & Loughor Swansea West & Gower	15-16

I gladly acknowledge the assistance of Owain Llyr ap Gareth on an earlier version of these boundaries.

Mid and West Wales

BRECON AND MONTGOMERY (76,216)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Brecon & Radnorshire	Powys	Beguildy, Bronllys, Builth, Bwlch, Crickhowell, Diserth & Trecoed, Felin-fach, Glasbury, Gwernyfed, Hay, Knighton, Llanafanfawr, Llanbadarn Fawr, Llandrindod (3), Llanelwedd, Llangattock, Llangors, Llangunllo, Llangynidr, Llanwrtyd Wells, Llanyre, Maescar/ Llywel, Old Radnor, Presteigne, St David Within, St John, St Mary, Talgarth, Talybont-on-Usk, Yscir	42,606	55.9
Montgomeryshire	Powys	Berriew, Churchstoke, Dolforwyn, Forden, Guilsfield, Kerry, Llandrinio, Llandysilio, Llanfihangel, Llanfyllin, Llanwddyn, Llanrhaeadrym-Mochnant/ Llansilin, Llansantffraid, Meifod, Montgomery, Newtown (5), Trewern, Welshpool (3)	33,610	44.1

Mid and West Wales (cont.)

CARMARTHEN (77,434)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Carmarthen East & Dinefwr	Carmarthen-shire	Abergwili, Cenarth, Cilycwm, Cynwyl Gaeo, Gorslas, Llanddarog, Llandeilo, Llandovery, Llanegwad, Llanfihangel Aberbythych, Llanfihangel-ar-Arth, Llangadog, Llangeler, Llangunnor, Llangyndeyrn, Llanybydder, Manordeilo & Salem, St Ishmael,	34,916	45.1
Carmarthen West & South Pembrokeshire	Carmarthen-shire	Carmarthen Town (3), Cynwyl Elfed, Laugharne Township, Llanboidy, Llansteffan, St Clears, Trelech, Whitland	23,969	37.5
Carmarthen West & South Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire	Amroth, Lampeter Velfrey, Narberth, Narberth Rural	5,070	
Llanelli	Carmarthen-shire	Burry Port, Kidwelly, Pembrey, Trimsaran	11,071	14.3
Preseli Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire	Maenclochog	2,408	3.1

This seat sits somewhat to the south and west of the pre-1997 single Carmarthen seat.

CEREDIGION (74,569)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Ceredigion	Ceredigion	Entire current constituency	56,006	75.1
Preseli Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire	Cilgerran, Clydau, Crymych, Dinas Cross, Newport, St Dogmael's	8,702	11.7
Montgomeryshire	Powys	Blaen Hafren, Caersws, Llandinam, Llanidloes	7,057	9.5
Brecon & Radnorshire	Powys	Nantmel, Rhayader	2,804	3.8

This constituency is somewhat reminiscent of the 1983-97 'Ceredigion and Pembroke North', with some inland additions from Powys.

Mid and West Wales (cont.)

GWYNEDD & MACHYNLLETH (75,193)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Dwyfor Meirionnydd	Gwynedd	Entire current constituency	44,796	59.6
Arfon	Gwynedd	Bethel, Bontnewydd, Cadnant, Cwm-y-Glo, Groeslon, Llanberis, Llanllyfni, Llanrug, Llanwnda, Menai (Caernarfon), Peblig (C), Penisarwaun, Penygroes, Seiont, Talysam, Waunfawr, Y Felinheli	22,501	30.0
Montgomeryshire	Powys	Banwy, Glantwymyn, Llanbrynmair, Llanfair Caereinion, Machynlleth, Rhiwcynon	7,896	10.5

This is one of the most severe alterations of the entire plan, with the whole of one seat (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) and over half another (Arfon) – plus a piece from another authority – compressed into one seat. This is inevitable given the strict rules on equality of registered electorate – in previous redistributions the BCW has chosen to allow small seats in the north west of Wales in recognition primarily of its rugged geography.

LLANELLI (79,119)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Llanelli	Carmarthen-shire	Bigyn, Bynea, Dafen, Elli, Felinfoel, Glanymor, Glyn, Hendy, Hengoed, Llangennech, Llannon, Lliedi, Llwynhendy, Pontyberem, Swiss Valley, Tycroes, Tyisha	47,376	59.9
Carmarthen East & Dinefwr	Carmarthen-shire	Ammanford, Betws, Garnant, Glanamman, Llandybie, Penygroes, Pontamman, Quarter Bach, Saron	19,369	24.5
Gower	Swansea	Llangyfelach, Mawr, Penllergaer, Pontardulais	12,374	15.6

Mid and West Wales (cont.)

PEMBROKE (76,321)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Preseli Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire	Burton, Camrose, Fishguard (2), Goodwick, Haverfordwest (5), Johnston, Letterston, Llangwm, Llanrhian, Merlin's Bridge, Milford (6), Neyland (2), Rudbaxton, St David's, St Ishmael's, Scleddau, Solva, The Havens, Wiston	46,856	61.4
Carmarthen West & South Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire	Carew, East Williamston, Hundleton, Kilgetty/ Begelly, Lamphey, Manorbier, Martletwy, Pembroke Dock (4), Pembroke (4), Saundersfoot, Tenby (2)	29,465	38.6

This seat is not dissimilar to the Pembroke seat which existed before 1997.

North Wales

ANGLESEY AND BANGOR (74,008)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Ynys Mon	Isle of Anglesey	Entire current constituency	49,524	66.9
Arfon	Gwynedd	Arlechwedd, Deiniol, Deiniolen, Dewi, Garth, Gerlan, Glyder, Hendre, Hirael, Marchog, Menai (Bangor), Ogwen, Pentir, Tregarth & Mynydd Llandygai	18,206	24.6
Aberconwy	Conwy	Bryn, Capelulo, Pandy, Pant-yr-afon/ Penmaenan	6,278	8.5

With regard to the specific formation of this seat, combining Anglesey with Bangor is the obvious course of action, but taking the town area does not quite get one to the threshold constituency size. The choice is either to extend south, and essentially split Caernarfon, or north along the A55 corridor with a few Conwy wards.

This constituency also raises the question of names of Welsh seats. Assembly constituencies and local authorities are bilingual, and have official Welsh and English names (sometimes the same). This might be worth extending to Westminster constituencies. Here, and in general in this report, the English name is used – it seems sensible to render this into English and for official Welsh names for others to be designated, although there are precedents for Welsh conjunctions being put in the full constituency title ‘Meirionnydd nant Conwy’. The BCW will no doubt take consultations and form a view.

CONWY AND ABERGELE (73,983)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Clwyd West	Conwy	Abergele Pensam, Betws yn Rhos, Colwyn, Eirias, Gele, Glyn, Kinmel Bay, Llanddulas, Llandrillo yn Rhos, Llysfaen, Mochdre, Pentre Mawr, Rhiw, Towyn	42,350	57.2
Aberconwy	Conwy	Caerhun, Conwy, Craig-y-Don, Deganwy, Gogarth, Llansanffraid, Marl, Mostyn, Penrhyn, Pensarn, Tudno	31,633	42.8

North Wales (cont.)

DENBIGH (74,210)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Clwyd South	Wrexham	Cefn, Dyffryn Ceiriog/ Ceiriog Valley, Chirk (2), Johnstown, Llangollen Rural, Pant, Penycae (2), Plas Madoc, Ponciau, Ruabon	25,201	42.2
Clwyd South	Denbighshire	Corwen, Llandrillo, Llangollen	6,148	
Clwyd West	Denbighshire	Efenechtyd, Llanarmon-yn- la/ Llandegla, Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd/ Llangynhafal, Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/ Gwyddelwern, Llanrhaeadr-yng- Nghinmeirch, Ruthin	12,004	21.4
Clwyd West	Conwy	Llangernyw, Llansannan, Uwchaled	3,861	
Vale of Clwyd	Denbighshire	Denbigh (3), Llandyrnog	9,218	12.4
Delyn	Flintshire	Caerwys, Cilcaïn, Gwernaffield, Gwernymynydd, Halkyn	7,974	10.7
Aberconwy	Conwy	Betws-y-Coed, Crwst, Eglwysbach, Gower, Trefriw, Uwch Conwy	7,051	9.5
Alyn & Deeside	Flintshire	Llanfynydd, Treuddyn	2,753	3.7

This is one of the more complicated seats created in the model. It is perhaps the price paid for the tidy arrangement of constituencies along the north coast, although in its defence it is linked together along the A5 road, running inland from the A55/ coastal corridor. It is a much-altered version of Clwyd South.

FLINT AND RHYL (75,550)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Vale of Clwyd	Denbighshire	Bodelwyddan, Dyserth, Prestatyn (5), Rhuddlan, Rhyl (5), St Asaph (2), Trefnant, Tremeirchion	47,046	62.3
Delyn	Flintshire	Bagyllt (2), Brynford, Ffynnongroyw, Flint (4), Greenfield, Gronant, Holywell (3), Mostyn, Trelawnyd & Gwaenysgor, Whitford	28,504	37.7

North Wales (cont.)

MOLD AND SHOTTON (76,160)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Alyn & Deeside	Flintshire	Aston, Broughton (2), Buckley (4), Gaergwrle, Connah's Quay (4), Ewloe, Hawarden, Higher Kinnerton, Hope, Mancot, Penyffordd, Queensferry, Saltney (2), Sealand, Shotton (3)	58,732	77.1
Delyn	Flintshire	Argoed, Leeswood, Mold (4), New Brighton, Northop, Northop Hall	17,428	22.9

WREXHAM (74,563)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Wrexham	Wrexham	Entire current constituency	51,669	69.3
Clwyd South	Wrexham	Bronington, Brymbo, Bryn Cefn, Coedpoeth, Esclusham, Gwenfro, Marchwiell, Minera, New Broughton, Overton	22,894	30.7

South Wales Central

BARRY AND PENARTH (75,243)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Vale of Glamorgan	Vale of Glamorgan	Baruc, Buttrills, Cadoc, Castleland, Court, Dinas Powys, Dyfan, Gibbonsdown, Illtyd, Llandough (small part), Peterston-super-Ely, Rhoose, St Athan, Wenvoe	53,807	71.5
Cardiff South & Penarth	Vale of Glamorgan	Cornerswell, Llandough (most), Plymouth, St Augustine's, Stanwell, Sully	21,436	28.5

CARDIFF CENTRAL (77,280)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Cardiff Central	Cardiff	Adamsdown, Cathays, Penlyan, Plasnewydd	43,195	55.9
Cardiff South & Penarth	Cardiff	Butetown, Grangetown, Splott	27,386	35.4
Cardiff North	Cardiff	Gabalfa	6,699	8.7

The constituency now covers the Cardiff Bay side of the city centre, previously in South & Penarth.

CARDIFF NORTH EAST (75,647)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Cardiff North	Cardiff	Lisvane, Llanishen, Pontprennau/ Old St Mellons (most), Rhiwbina	31,756	42.0
Cardiff South & Penarth	Cardiff	Llanrumney, Rumney, Trowbridge, Pontprennau/ Old St Mellons (small part)	24,868	32.9
Cardiff Central	Cardiff	Cyncoed, Pentwyn	19,023	25.1

CARDIFF WEST (79,675)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Cardiff West	Cardiff	Caerau, Canton, Ely, Fairwater, Llandaff, Riverside	51,840	65.1
Cardiff North	Cardiff	Heath, Llandaff North, Whitchurch & Tongwynlais	27,835	34.9

South Wales Central (cont.)

PONTYPRIDD AND ABERDARE (75,457)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Cynon Valley	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Entire current constituency	52,216	69.2
Pontypridd	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Graig, Hawthorn, Pontypridd Town, Rhydfelen Central/ Ilan, Taff's Well, Trallwng, Treforest	18,731	24.8
Caerphilly	Caerphilly	Aber Valley	4,510	6.0

RHONDDA AND OGMORE (74,959)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Rhondda	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Entire current constituency	52,765	70.4
Ogmore	Bridgend	Blackmill, Bryncethin, Bryncoch, Felindre, Hendre, Nant-y-moel, Ogmore Vale, Penprysg	16,097	24.8
Ogmore	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Gilfach Goch	2,499	
Pontypridd	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Rhondda	3,598	4.8

South Wales Central (cont.)

VALE OF ELY (75,362)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Pontypridd	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Beddau, Church Village, Llanharry (small part), Llantrisant Town, Llantwit Fardre, Pont-y-Clun (most), Talbot Green, Ton-teg, Tonyrefail (2), Tyn-y-nant	37,867	50.2
Ogmore	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Brynna, Llanharan, Llanharry (most), Pont-y-Clun (part), Talbot Green (small part),	8,791	11.7
Vale of Glamorgan	Vale of Glamorgan	Cowbridge, Llandow/ Ewenny, Llantwit Major, St Bride's Major	17,364	23.0
Cardiff West	Cardiff	Creigiau/ St Fagans, Pentwrch, Radyr & Morganstown	11,520	15.3

An alternative name for the seat might be 'Llantrisant and Cowbridge'. The Llantwit Major/ Cowbridge section of the seat was in the pre-1983 Pontypridd seat, which this seat somewhat resembles (lacking, of course, the town of Pontypridd itself).

South Wales East

BLAENAU GWENT AND TREDEGAR (77,999)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Blaenau Gwent	Blaenau Gwent	Entire local authority	53,517	68.6
Islwyn	Caerphilly	Argoed, Crumlin, Newbridge, Penmaen	14,877	19.1
Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney	Caerphilly	Moriah, New Tredegar, Pontlottyn, Twyn Carno	9,605	12.3

CAERPHILLY (75,759)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Caerphilly	Caerphilly	Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen, Morgan Jones, Penyrheol, St James, St Martins	31,804	42.0
Islwyn	Caerphilly	Abercarn, Blackwood, Crosskeys, Maesycwmmmer, Pontllanfraith, Risca (2), Ynysddu	31,802	42.0
Newport West	Newport	Graig, Marshfield, Tredegar Park	12,153	16.0

This is the most equal merger of two previous seats in the model.

MERTHYR TYDFIL AND YSTRAD MYNACH (78,403)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney	Merthyr Tydfil	Entire local authority	43,344	57.6
Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney	Caerphilly	Darren Valley	1,808	
Caerphilly	Caerphilly	Bargoed, Gilfach, Hengoed, Llanbradach, Nelson, St Cattwg, Ystrad Mynach	25,319	32.3
Islwyn	Caerphilly	Aberbargoed, Cefn Fforest, Pengam	7,932	10.1

South Wales East (cont.)

MONMOUTH (78,526)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Monmouth	Monmouthshire	All wards in current constituency	56,995	82.9
Monmouth	Torfaen	Croesyceiliog (2), Llanyrafon (2)	8,106	
Newport East	Monmouthshire	All Monmouthshire wards	13,425	17.1

NEWPORT (78,783)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Newport East	Newport	Alway, Beechwood, Langstone, Liswerry, Llanwern, Ringland, St Julians, Victoria	41,401	52.6
Newport West	Newport	Allt-yr-yn, Bettws, Gaer, Pillgwenlly, Rogerstone, Shaftesbury, Stow Hill	37,382	47.4

TORFAEN (74,574)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Torfaen	Torfaen	Entire current constituency	61,644	82.7
Newport West	Newport	Caerleon, Malpas	12,930	17.3

South Wales West

BRIDGEND (73,958)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Bridgend	Bridgend	Entire current constituency	58,936	79.7
Ogmore	Bridgend	Aberkenfig, Bettws, Blaengarw, Cefn Cribwr, Llangeinor, Llangynwydd, Pontcymmer, Sarn, Ynysawdre	15,022	20.3

NEATH AND ABERAVON (73,244)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Aberavon	Neath Port Talbot	Aberavon, Baglan, Briton Ferry (2), Bryn & Cwmavon, Cymmer, Glyncorwg, Gwynfi, Margam, Port Talbot, Sandfields (2), Tai-bach	44,146	60.3
Neath	Neath Port Talbot	Cimla, Neath (3), Pelenna	15,808	21.6
Ogmore	Bridgend	Caerau, Maesteg (2)	13,290	18.1

SWANSEA EAST AND VALE OF NEATH (78,176)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Neath	Neath Port Talbot	Aberdulais, Allt-wen, Blaengwrach, Bryn-coch (2), Cadoxton, Crynant, Cwmllynfell, Dyffryn, Glynneath, Godre'r graig, Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, Lower Brynamman, Onllwyn, Pontardawe, Resolven, Rhos, Seven Sisters, Tonna, Trebanos, Ystalyfera	41,810	53.5
Swansea East	Swansea	Bonymaen, Llansamlet, St Thomas	21,255	27.2
Brecon & Radnorshire	Powys	Aber-craf, Cwm-twrch, Tawe-Uchaf, Ynyscedwyn, Ystradgynlais	8,223	10.5
Aberavon	Neath Port Talbot	Coedffranc (3)	6,888	8.8

Despite the name, best seen as a radically altered successor to Neath.

South Wales West (cont.)

SWANSEA NORTH AND LOUGHOR (74,571)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Swansea East	Swansea	Cwmbwrla, Landore, Morriston, Mynyddbach, Penderry	39,299	52.7
Gower	Swansea	Clydach, Gorseinon, Gowerton, Kingsbridge, Lower Loughor, Penyrheol, Upper Loughor	24,837	33.3
Swansea West	Swansea	Cockett	10,435	14.0

Despite the name this is a successor to Swansea East. The constituency is a slightly odd shape, but still fairly geographically coherent – northern suburbs west of the Tawe plus the Gorseinon/ Loughor area.

SWANSEA WEST AND GOWER (76,654)				
Current constituency	Local authority	Wards	Electors	Share %
Swansea West	Swansea	Castle, Dunvant, Killay (2), Mayals, Sketty, Townhill, Uplands	51,717	67.5
Gower	Swansea	Bishopston, Fairwood, Gower, Newton, Penclawdd, Oystermouth, Pennard, West Cross	24,937	32.5

The Gower constituency is presently a rather odd one, combining the Gower peninsula with the Lliw Valley area north west of Swansea, two areas with rather little in common. Wards such as Fairwood and West Cross are really extensions of west Swansea, and this seat probably better follows the local lines of communication and identity.

ABOUT DEMOCRATIC AUDIT

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