



The Monmouthshire Association
A county group of the Association of British Counties

Patron:
The Right Reverend Dominic Walker, OGS,
9th Bishop of Monmouth.

<http://monmouthshire-association.org.uk>

2013 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN WALES

PROPOSALS FOR THE HISTORIC COUNTY OF MONMOUTH AND ENVIRONS

January 2012

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Analysis of Commission's proposals	3
Newport Central	3
Newport West and Sirhowy Valley	3
Monmouthshire	4
Torfaen	4
Blaenau Gwent	4
Heads of the Valleys	5
Caerphilly and Cardiff North	5
Proposed Constituencies	6
Synopsis	6
Newport Central	7
Newport West and West Monmouthshire	8
Newport East and East Monmouthshire	10
Mid Monmouthshire	12
North Monmouthshire	14
North Glamorgan	16
Caerphilly and Cardiff North	18
Acknowledgements	19

Introduction

The Association's area of interest is the historic county of Monmouth. It is our opinion that the Commission's proposals for constituencies in this area are unsuitable. We therefore object to the proposals as published and hereby propose an alternative solution.

The Association believes that the Commission's retention of existing constituency names where the constituency is significantly different from the existing constituency and different again from a local government principal area is confusing and should not be followed. Of our proposed constituencies, none is similar to an existing principal area or shares its name. We feel that the freedom offered the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 (c. 1) should be maximised. Without the strict adherence to local government or preserved county boundaries, constituencies that better reflect physical geography and history can be created.

Unfortunately the Commission's proposals seem to be too conservative with regards to local government boundaries at the expense of more balanced constituencies. For instance, the Monmouthshire principal area is entirely contained within the proposed "Monmouthshire" constituency despite it not being a single settlement or even a single urban area, whereas four constituencies share parts of the single city of Newport. The Association considers that a more even division can be created, as discussed below.

Analysis of Commission's proposals

Newport Central

The Association agrees with the creation of a "Newport Central" constituency. This is seen as an unavoidable consequence of the new stringent electoral quota rule and insufficient electors for two Newport constituencies. The Association however believes that the remaining parts of the city of Newport insufficient to form a single constituency should only fall into two other constituencies, rather than being portioned out into three others. The inclusion of a single Newport electoral district in one constituency and an adjacent one in a different constituency seems particularly hard to justify. Our proposals group three Newport electoral districts together either side of Newport Central to be incorporated into neighbouring constituencies. This avoids splitting up the electorate of adjacent areas of the city unnecessarily.

Newport West and Sirhowy Valley

This constituency seems to be designed as an afterthought — it pays no respect to geography, history, administration or any sort of local ties. Incorporating the western suburbs of Newport with places such as Nelson seems to defy logical explanation. Incorporating northerly Aberbargoed but not the more southerly Blackwood is similarly baffling.

Furthermore, the Llanbradach electoral district, which extends as far south as Pwllpant, ought to be logically part of any Caerphilly constituency, yet it is proposed to be included with Newport West while districts either side of it are proposed to be part of “Caerphilly and Cardiff North”. This constituency appears to have been formed solely on the basis of the size of the potential electorate — it is unacceptable in every other way.

Our proposals for this constituency group together electoral districts in a more geographically sensible fashion, incorporating places east of the Rhymney River that have been treated together for Parliamentary purposes for centuries.

Monmouthshire

The Commission’s proposed “Monmouthshire” constituency consists of the Monmouthshire principal area with the addition of Langstone from the city of Newport. The justification for this is that the Commission intends to respect the local authority boundary between the Torfaen and Monmouthshire principal areas, even though it does not intend to respect the local authority boundary between Torfaen and Newport. This leads to the eastern electoral districts of Newport being split across both the proposed “Monmouthshire” and “Torfaen” constituencies. The Association objects to both the proposed unqualified name and area of this constituency.

Torfaen

The proposed “Torfaen” constituency consists of the Torfaen principal area with the addition of Caerleon from the city of Newport. The Association objects to this as it splits the city of Newport across four constituencies. As the proposed area is significantly different from the Torfaen principal area we also object to the name. Our proposals for this constituency avoid incorporating any areas of Newport and are discussed below.

Blaenau Gwent

The Commission’s proposed “Blaenau Gwent” constituency include the entire of the Blaenau Gwent principal area plus the residual electoral districts not included in the “Newport West and Sirhowy Valley” constituency. The Association objects to this proposed constituency, as it is substantially different to the existing Blaenau Gwent constituency. Our proposals for this constituency reunite the communities of Rhymney and New Tredegar with others to the east of the Rhymney River to form a new geographically and historically acceptable constituency.

Heads of the Valleys

The Association broadly agrees with the proposed “Heads of the Valleys” constituency. We agree that the Merthyr Tydfil area has more in common with urban areas of Glamorgan to the west rather than the rural areas of Brecknockshire to the north. Our proposals take this idea further and reunite the areas of Rhymney and New Tredegar with areas to the east which they are most historically and geographically associated.

Caerphilly and Cardiff North

The Association broadly agrees with the proposed “Caerphilly and Cardiff North” constituency. However our proposals incorporate the Llanbradach and Pwllpant areas with Caerphilly and the realign the eastern border to the Rhymney River to provide a constituency with more geographic and historic basis.

Proposed Constituencies

Synopsis

The Association proposes seven new constituencies in place of seven of the Commission's proposals. Our proposals have many advantages over the Commission's proposals — in many cases reuniting towns that have long had cultural and geographical associations but of late have been disassociated for Parliamentary purposes.

Despite the differing geographic coverage of our proposals it is possible to compare them:

- The proposed “**Newport Central**” constituency remains broadly similar but more geographically compact than the Commission's proposal.
- A “**Newport West and West Monmouthshire**” with a more favourable geographic coverage replaces the proposed “Newport West and Sirhowy Valley” constituency.
- A “**Newport East and East Monmouthshire**” replaces the proposed “Monmouthshire” constituency.
- A “**Mid Monmouthshire**” constituency replaces the proposed “Torfaen” constituency.
- A “**North Monmouthshire**” constituency replaces the proposed “Blaenau Gwent” constituency.
- A “**North Glamorgan**” constituency replaces the proposed “Heads of the Valleys”.
- “**Caerphilly and Cardiff North**” remains broadly similar but with minor alterations.

A KMZ file of all the constituencies is available at <http://monmouthshire-association.org.uk/boundary-reviews/2013/constituencies.kmz>. This allows our proposals to be viewed in applications such as Google Earth.

Alternatively an on-line representation can be achieved by accessing the KMZ file directly inside Google Maps:

<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?q=http://monmouthshire-association.org.uk/boundary-reviews/2013/constituencies.kmz>

Newport Central

The Association's proposed Newport Central Borough Constituency is broadly similar to the Commission's proposal with the exception that the Llanwern electoral district is excluded — resulting in a more geographically balanced constituency that still falls within the desired electorate range.

Newport Central BC

Allt-yr-Yn	6,555
Alway	5,664
Beechwood	5,601
Bettws	5,452
Gaer	6,304
Liswerry	7,671
Malpas	6,041
Pillgwenlly	4,382
Ringland	6,160
Shaftesbury	3,767
St. Julians	6,144
Stow Hill	3,079
Tredegar Park	2,922
Victoria	4,455
Total	74,197

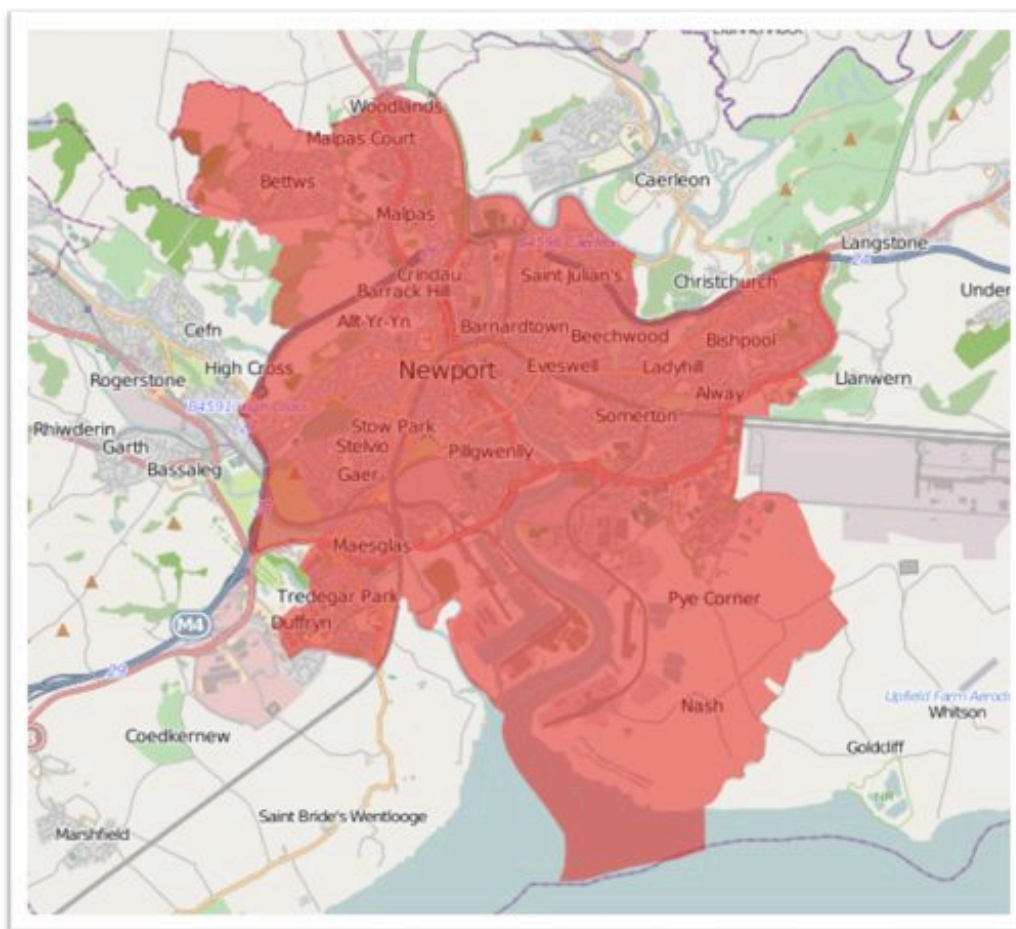


Figure 1 - Newport Central

Newport West and West Monmouthshire

The Association's proposed Newport West and West Monmouthshire County Constituency is similar to the Commission's "Newport West and Sirhowy Valley" constituency but with electoral districts exchanged with neighbouring constituencies to achieve a more balanced geographical spread.

It contains those electoral districts of the city of Newport west of those contained in the proposed "Newport Central" constituency — namely Grain, Marshfield and Rogerstone — providing 17,074 electors that are combined with adjacent northern electoral districts lying east of the Rhymney River.

This proposed constituency groups areas with much more in common geographically and historically than the Commission's proposal. It is of note that this proposal contains areas that were all previously part of the 1885 South Monmouthshire constituency.

Newport West and West Monmouthshire CC

Abercarn	3,881
Crosskeys	2,445
Grain	4,620
Maesycwmmmer	1,707
Marshfield	4,611
Pengam	2,681
Pontllanfraith	6,159
Rica East	4,643
Rica West	3,988
Rogerstone	7,843
Ynysddu	2,811
Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen	7,630
Cefn Fforest	2,742
Blackwood	6,168
Penmaen	3,946
Newbridge	4,685
Crumlin	4,334
Total	74,894

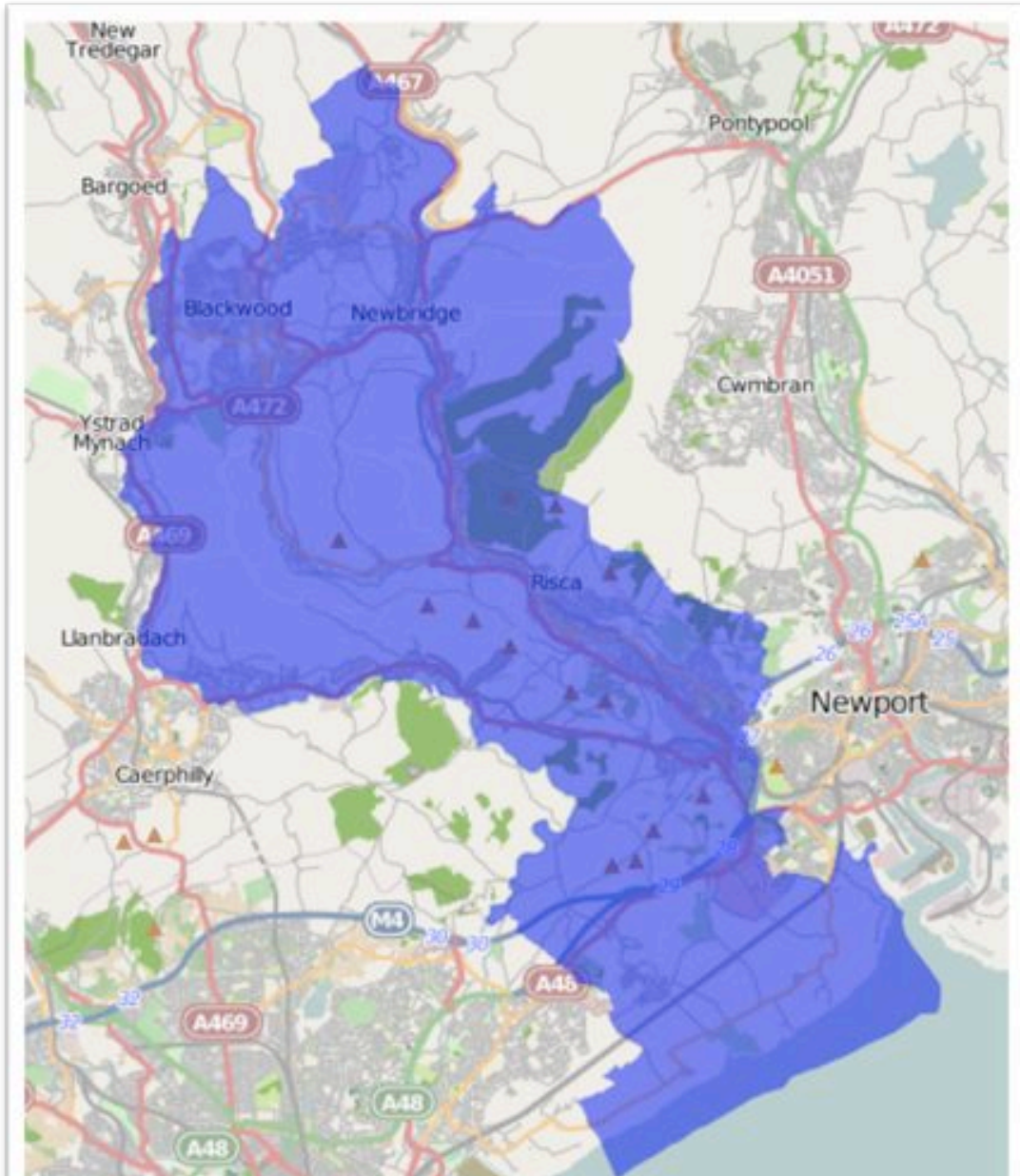


Figure 2 - Newport West & West Monmouthshire

Newport East and East Monmouthshire

This constituency contains the electoral districts of the city of Newport east of those contained in the Newport Central constituency — namely Caerleon, Langstone and Llanwern — providing 12,595 electors that are combined with eastern electoral districts of the Monmouthshire principal area making a total within the desired electorate range.

This proposal keeps the eastern parts of Newport together in a single constituency rather than splitting the three city electoral districts across three separate constituencies. These mostly rural electoral districts have a natural geographic affinity with those adjacent districts from the Monmouthshire principal area.

Newport East and East Monmouthshire CC

Caerwent	1,434	Mitchel Troy	977
Caldicot Castle	1,536	Overmonnow	1,779
Cantref	1,693	Portskewett	1,702
Castle	1,616	Priory	1,508
Croesonen	1,635	Raglan	1,552
Crucorney	1,702	Rogiet	1,335
Devauden	1,175	Severn	1,395
Dewstow	1,485	Shirenewton	1,778
Dixton with Osbaston	1,875	St. Arvans	1,260
Drybridge	2,535	St. Christopher's	1,872
Green Lane	1,523	St. Kingsmark	2,275
Grofield	1,382	St. Mary's	1,449
Lansdown	1,711	The Elms	2,435
Larkfield	1,532	Thornwell	2,038
Llanfoist Fawr	1,409	Trellech United	2,155
Llanover	1,841	West End	1,536
Llantilio Crossenny	1,414	Wyesham	1,673
Llanwenarth Ultra	1,126	Caerleon	6,889
Mardy	1,414	Llanwern	2,264
Mill	2,180	Langstone	3,442
Total			73,532

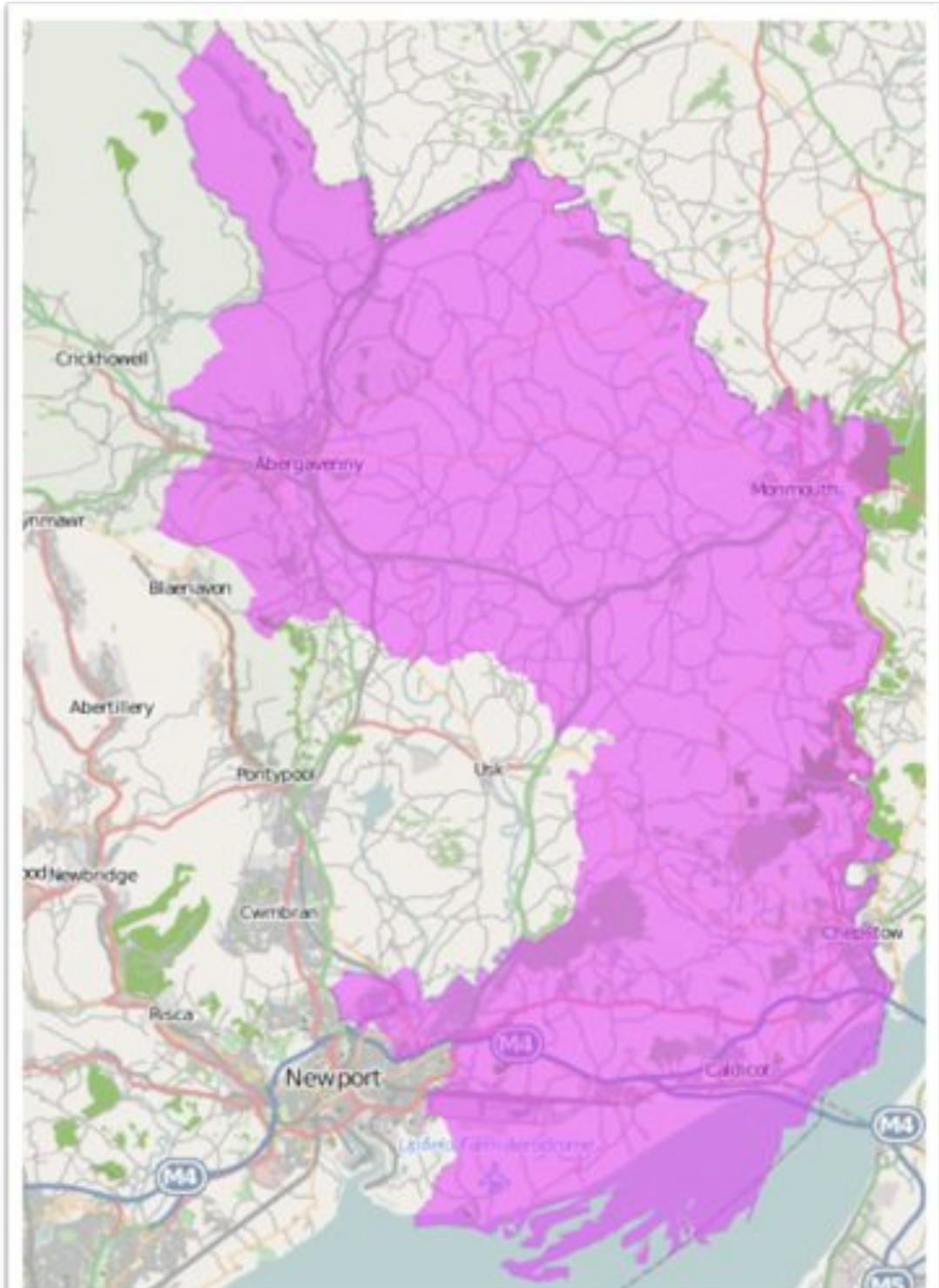


Figure 3 - Newport East & East Monmouthshire

Mid Monmouthshire

The Association's proposed Mid Monmouthshire contains all electoral districts in the Torfaen principal area combined with adjacent electoral districts from the centre of the Monmouthshire principal area. This produces a constituency of a very similar electorate to the Commission's proposed "Torfaen" constituency but without incorporating anything from the city of Newport.

The proposal incorporates the towns of Blaenavon, Cwmbran, Pontypool and Usk and surrounding rural areas. There are no physical or geographic barriers between the different parts of the proposed constituency; therefore there are good communication links between all four towns.

Mid Monmouthshire CC

Abersychan	5,286
Blaenavon	4,479
Brynwern	1,368
Coed Eva	1,695
Croesyceiliog North	2,762
Croesyceiliog South	1,487
Cwmyniscoy	1,064
Fairwater	4,051
Greenmeadow	2,925
Llantarnam	4,088
Llanyrafon North	1,621
Llanyrafon South	2,236
New Inn	4,881
Panteg	5,663
Pontnewydd	4,818
Pontnewynydd	1,163
Pontypool	1,449
Snatchwood	1,581
St. Cadocs and Penygarn	1,129
St. Dials	2,777
Trevethin	2,518
Two Locks	4,729
Upper Cwmbran	4,077
Wainfelin	1,903
Llanbadoc	1,038
Usk	1,943
Llangybi Fawr	1,483
Goetre Fawr	1,862
Total	76,076

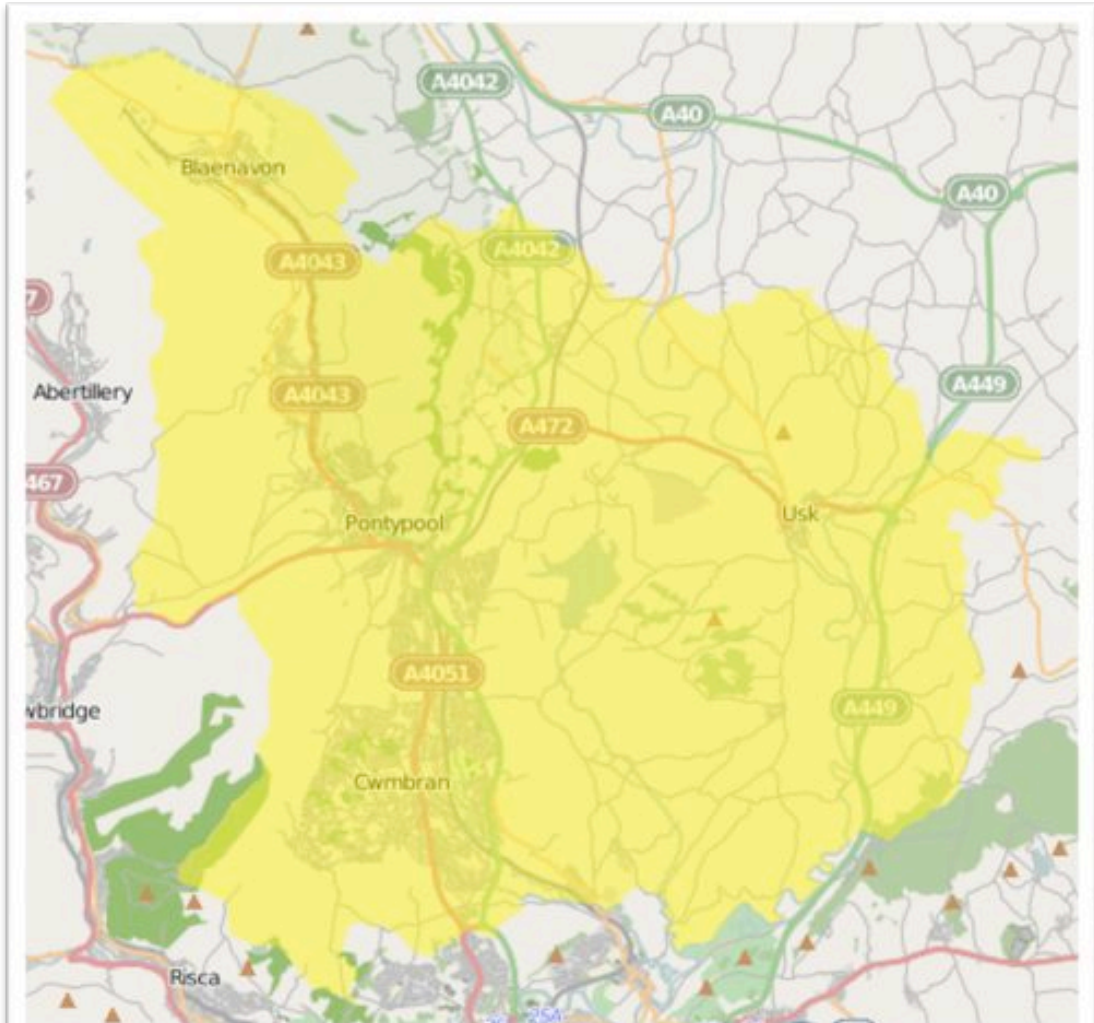


Figure 4 - Mid Monmouthshire

North Monmouthshire

This proposed constituency is similar to the Commission's proposed "Blaenau Gwent" constituency with a few electoral districts exchanged with neighbouring constituencies.

This proposal brings together the towns of Rhymney and New Tredegar from the Commission's proposed "Heads of the Valleys" constituency that have historically been treated together with other northern Monmouthshire towns for Parliamentary purposes. This has obvious historical and geographic advantages over the Commission's proposal.

North Monmouthshire CC

Abertillery	3,421
Argoed	1,912
Badminton	2,544
Beaufort	2,976
Blaina	3,605
Brynmaur	4,212
Cwm	3,419
Cwmtillery	3,667
Ebbw Vale North	3,467
Ebbw Vale South	3,021
Georgetown	2,668
Llanhilleth	3,686
Nantyglo	3,491
Rassau	2,494
Sirhowy	4,387
Six Bells	1,878
Tredegar Central and West	4,581
Aberbargoed	2,509
New Tredegar	3,361
Moriah	3,164
Twyn Carno	1,670
Pontlottyn	1,410
Bargoed	4,331
Llanelly Hill	3,157
Total	75,031

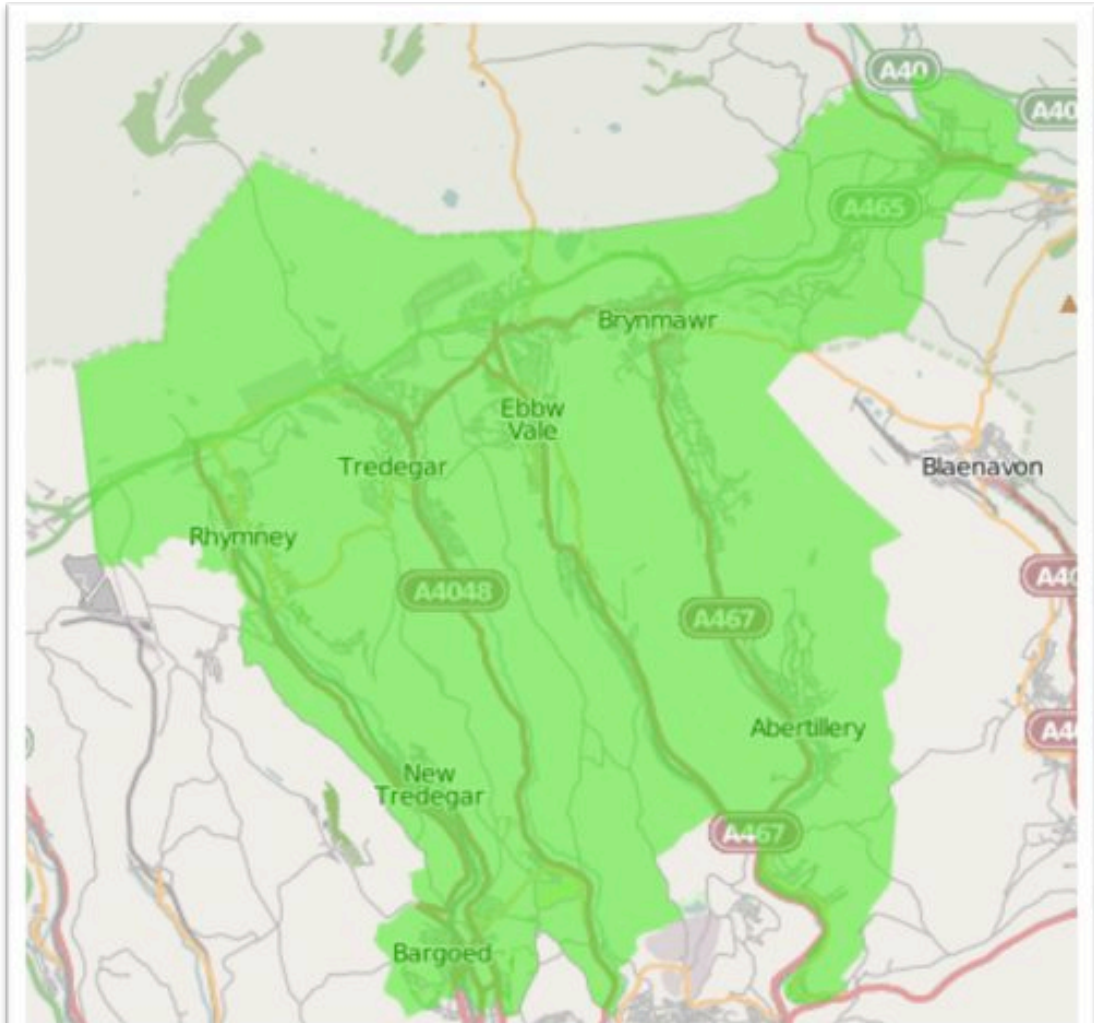


Figure 5 - North Monmouthshire

North Glamorgan

As a consequence of electoral districts exchanged with neighbouring constituencies it becomes possible to redefine the Commission's proposed "Heads of the Valleys" constituency as "North Glamorgan". This has historic and geographic advantages that the Commission's proposed "Heads of the Valleys" constituency does not.

North Glamorgan CC

Aberdare East	5,236
Aberdare West/Llwydcoed	7,324
Bedlinog	2,547
Cyfarthfa	5,065
Darran Valley	1,808
Dowlais	5,041
Gurnos	3,386
Hirwaun	3,176
Merthyr Vale	2,830
Park	3,289
Pen-y-Waun	2,122
Penydarren	3,780
Plymouth	3,991
Rhigos	1,414
Town	5,700
Treharris	4,928
Vaynor	2,787
Hengoed	3,671
St. Cattwg	5,586
Gilfach	1,525
Total	75,206

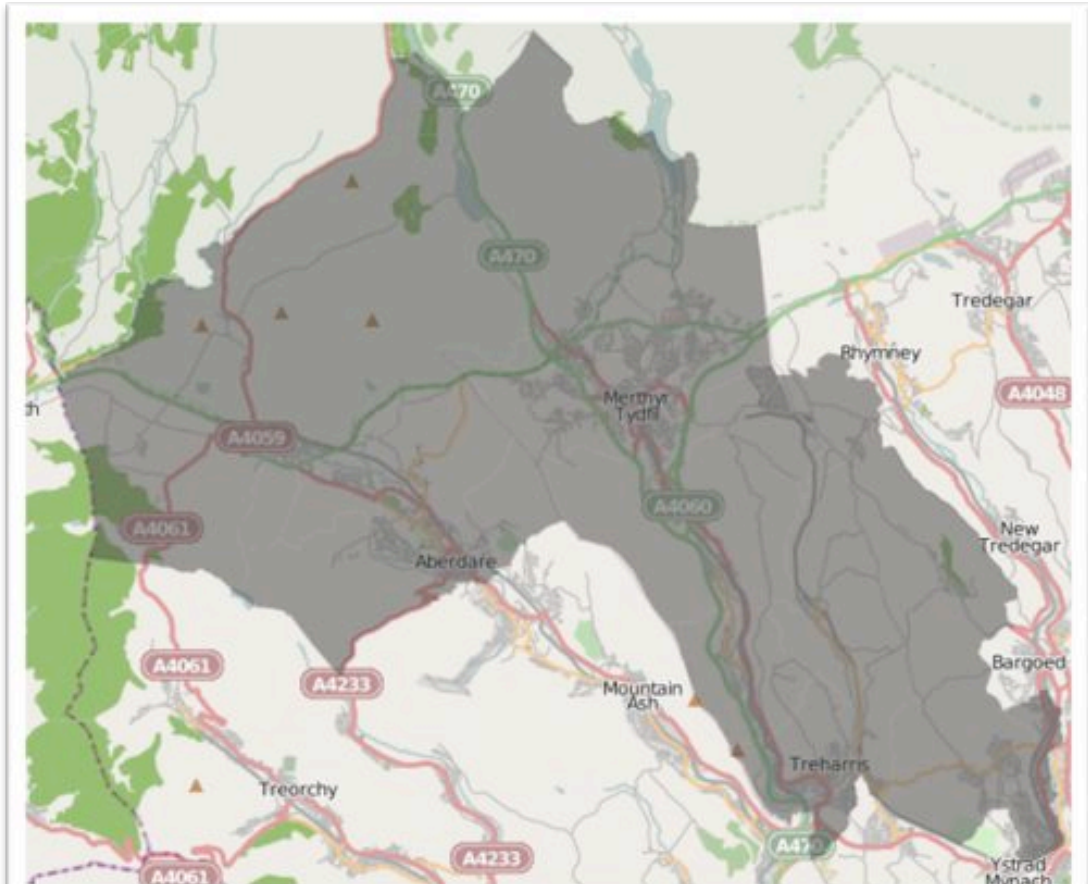


Figure 6 - North Glamorgan

Caerphilly and Cardiff North

This constituency is based upon the Commission's proposed "Caerphilly and Cardiff North" constituency, but with a few electoral districts exchanged with neighbouring constituencies.

Caerphilly and Cardiff North CC

Aber Valley	4,510
Lisvane	2,839
Llanishen	12,945
Morgan Jones	4,909
Penyrheol	8,777
Rhiwbina	9,103
St. James	4,153
St. Martins	6,335
Whitchurch and Tongwynlais	12,672
Llanbradach	3,171
Nelson	3,482
Ystrad Mynach	3,553
Total	76,449

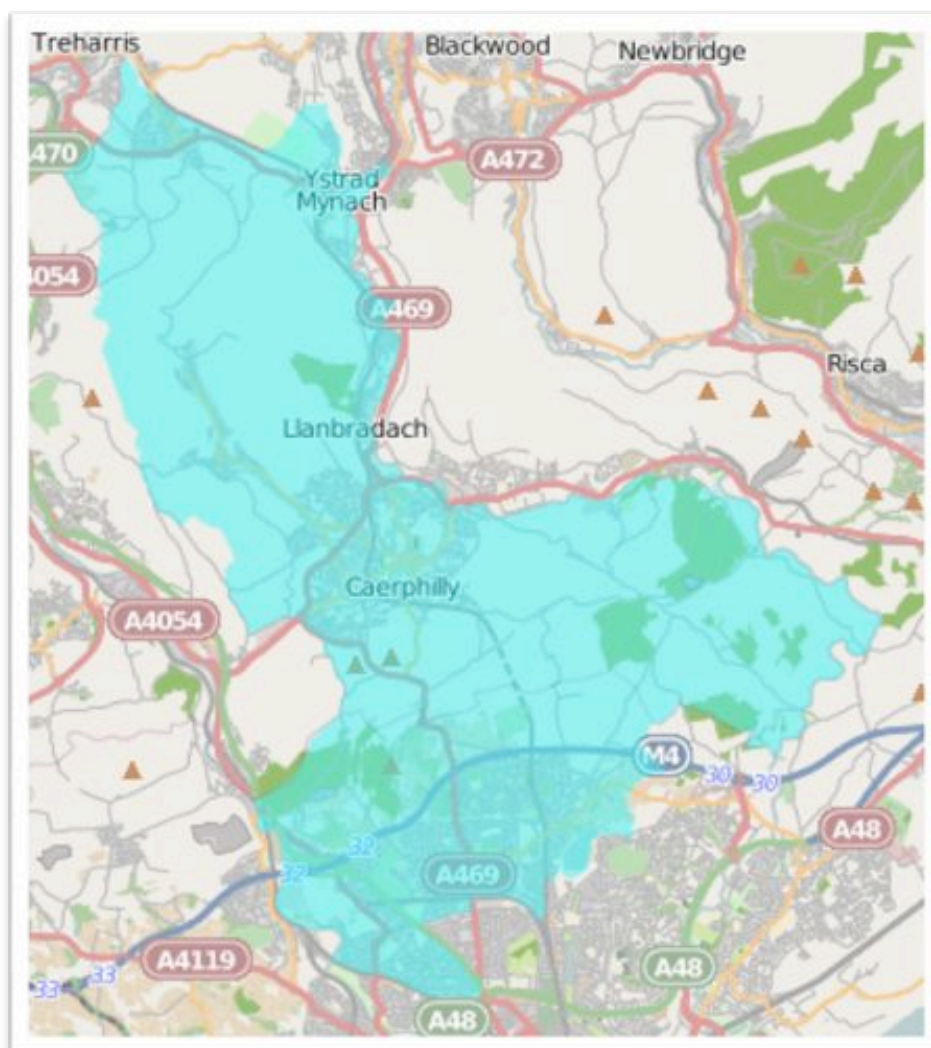


Figure 7 - Caerphilly & Cardiff North

Acknowledgements

Boundaries were generated using Ordnance Survey data used under the terms of the *OS OpenData licence*

(<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/opendata/licence/>).

© Crown copyright and database right 2010

Maps generated using OpenStreetMap.org data used under the terms of the *Creative Commons ShareAlike 2.0 licence*

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)

© OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA