

## **FINAL PROPOSALS**

### **Community No. M21 - LLANDYSSIL**

#### **Introduction**

1. The community of Llandyssil took its current form in the 1986 Review, when a warded community comprising the new village of Abermule and the historical village of Llandyssil was created from the former communities of Llandyssil, Llanmerewig and parts of the former Newtown and Bettws communities. The topography of the community is defined by the valley of the river Severn, the road and rail routes that follow its course, and the hills and tributary valleys leading away from it. Settlement in this community is defined in particular by the routes that lead to the A483 and Newtown. Both Abermule and Llandyssil have seen a significant amount of development in recent years. Abermule is classified as a key settlement in the Unitary Development Plan, benefiting from a good range of community services and infrastructure and having the capacity to accommodate additional development. Llandyssil is classified as a small village, having some community services and facilities, but being served by access roads that are not of the highest quality. The small village of Aberbechan, with its limited community services and facilities, straddles the community boundary with Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn, a point to which we shall return. The remainder of the population lives in scattered farms and dwellings and in the small rural settlements of Green Lane and Llanmerewig.

2. The community has a population of 1,218, an electorate of 1,004 (2005) and a council of 10 members. The community is warded: Abermule with 599 electors and five councillors; Llandyssil with 405 and five. The precept required for 2005 is £12,645, representing a Council Tax Band D equivalent of £22.89.

3. In the 1986 Review, the principal concern of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales, and of the representations that it received, was the growth of the divided village of Abermule, straddling the western boundary of the then community of Llandyssil. There was a general consensus that the community of Llandyssil should be enlarged to take in the whole of the village of Abermule and its rural hinterland, including the former very small community of Llanmerewig, the area around Dolforwyn Hall from the then community of Bettws, the area around Aberbechan Hall from the then community of Newtown, and the area at Goetre Hill from the then community of Kerry. Following other small boundary adjustments, the new community took shape and was warded to reflect the focus that each part of the new community had on the respective main settlements of Abermule and Llandyssil. The allocation of councillors after the 1986 Review was Abermule – five and Llandyssil – five, based on the electorate at 1980. The Commission endeavoured to avoid composite names for new communities, and, following consultations, it decided to retain the name of "Llandyssil" for the new community.

#### **Summary of representations received prior to preparation of Draft Proposals**

4. A submission form has been received from Llandyssil Community Council. This proposes that two additional councillors be allocated to the council because of recent development, and it is proposed that the two additional councillors be allocated the Abermule ward where that development has been greatest. The council also proposes that the name of the community be changed to Abermule / Llandyssil.

5. A submissions form and correspondence has been received from County Councillor W.T. Jones forwarding his own views and those of the Llandyssil Community Council. He requests that the number of councillors remains at ten: "to decrease would have negative representation effects in a fast expanding area; to increase would make it difficult to recruit councillors". He requests that the warding arrangement be retained as it would not be practicable to hold a single election for councillors in this community and as it is desirable that there be separate and clear representation for each ward. He also requests that the balance of councillors between wards be adjusted: "Due to rapid growth, the community's electorate is now 60 per cent in Abermule and 40 per cent in Llandyssil and yet councillors are split currently 50:50 (five each). This is already out of proportion and in next three years another 100 houses will be built in Abermule and very few in Llandyssil (not more than 5/10)." He concludes with representations on the name of the community: "Many members of the electorate already ask why there is not an Abermule Community Council and why the larger settlement has to come under Llandyssil. As Abermule is by far the larger settlement and also centrally poitioned, there is a very strong argument for a change of name from Llandyssil to Abermule. However, knowing the area as well as I do, I do think that this could cause some friction between the two wards, and I therefore feel strongly that it should be renamed 'Abermule and Llandyssil Community Council'. This would not be setting any precedent as there are other community councils with more than one name e.g. Forden with Leighton and Trelystan and Disserth and Trecoed to name just two."

## **Assessment**

6. The electorate of Llandyssil has increased from 600 in 1980 to 1,004 in 2005, and this increase will continue further. The Unitary Development Plan allocates considerable land in the key settlement of Abermule, and it is estimated that 114 dwellings would be an appropriate level of growth for this settlement in the Plan period. In the small village of Llandyssil there is no such allocated land, and in the small village of Aberbechan the land that has been allocated in the Plan is now largely developed. In all these settlements there may also be opportunities for infill development and opportunities for affordable housing development adjacent to the settlement development boundaries. There are also opportunities for affordable housing development in the rural settlements of Green Lane and Llanmerewig in accordance with Policy HP9 of the Plan, for a limited number of dwellings in the open countryside in accordance with Policy HP6 of the Plan, and for conversions in accordance with Policy GP6 of the Plan. The community's current entitlement in accordance with Table 7 - Guide to Allocation of Councillors to Community Councils is eleven councillors. However, we note that this community's electorate will probably increase to about 1,210, and at that stage there would be an entitlement to twelve councillors.

7. We have already noted that the small village of Aberbechan straddles the community boundary between Llandyssil and the community of Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn. This is clearly not in the interests of effective and convenient local government. Although this small village and nearby properties are located midway between Abermule and Newtown, this area is rural in character and gravitates to Abermule in the first instance, and we consider that an adjustment of the community boundary should be made here to include the whole of Aberbechan in the Abermule ward of Llandyssil community. This transfer would affect the properties of Pontbechan (six houses), Glen Coe, The Swallows and Tynllwyn, adding a further 15 or so electors to the community.

8. We proceed to give consideration to the warding arrangement in this community. We consider that the warding arrangement continues to serve this community well and meets the criteria in the 1972 Act that (a) the number or distribution of the local government electors for the community is such as to make a single election of community councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and (b) it is desirable that areas of the community should be separately represented on the community council. We wholly agree with County Councillor W.T. Jones that this is particularly desirable in this community with its key settlement at Abermule and its small village at Llandyssil both serving as the focus of each respective ward. The ward boundary follows field boundaries from Geufron Woods in the south to the summit of Cae Fedw and on to the river Severn in the north: a part-natural and part-manmade boundary that represents a very appropriate parting of local attachments.

9. Schedule 11(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires us, in fixing the number of community councillors to be elected for each ward, to have regard to any change in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the community which is likely to take place. As has been shown, the pace of development in the key settlement of Abermule has already created an imbalance in the allocation of councillors to wards in this community, and further development will exacerbate that imbalance. It is our estimate that there will shortly be just over 800 electors in the Abermule ward and just over 400 in the Llandyssil ward.

	Abermule	Llandyssil
Projected Electorate	800	410
Percentage of total electorate	66.1	33.9
Councillor entitlement (11)	7.27	3.73
Councillor entitlement (12)	7.93	4.07

A council with twelve members would lead quite simply to an allocation of eight councillors to the Abermule ward and four to Llandyssil. However, much of the development in the Abermule ward is yet to take place. Furthermore, we consider that a degree of parity of representation between wards is sometimes appropriate, and in this community and for the time being this would be the better secured by an allocation to the ratio of 7 : 4 on a council of eleven members. For the time being, this allocation would tend to favour the Abermule ward with a lower ratio of electors to councillors. However, as development continues at Abermule this ratio will shift, and we estimate that if the electorate of the Abermule ward reaches 800, the ratio would then stand at 1 : 114, slightly favouring the more rural Llandyssil ward where, it could be claimed, representation is required to meet the challenges of population sparsity.

10. Finally, we give consideration to the name of this community. In our Review Practice and Policy Document we stated that we would wish to avoid composite names other than in exceptional circumstances where the demands of history, local connection or the preservation of local ties made a pressing case for the retention of distinctive names. That said, there are times also in this review when we are required to give due weight to the overriding principle of effective and convenient local government. It is questionable at this time whether this overriding principle would be met by splitting this community, and if the greater cohesion and unity of the present community is our present objective and if the preservation of local ties are to be furthered, the composite name of Abermule with Llandyssil is a small price to surrender to achieve all this.

### **Draft Proposals**

11. That there should be a community of Abermule with Llandyssil comprising the present community of Llandyssil together with that part of the community of Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn at Aberbechan;

The community should have a council of 11 members;

The community should be warded as at present and that the transferred area at Aberbechan should be included in the Abermule ward.

(Ward)	Electorate	No of Councillors	Electors per Councillor
Abermule	599	7	86
Llandyssil	405	4	100

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### **Responses to the Council's Draft Proposals**

12. A form of submissions has been received from County Councillor W.T. Jones supporting the Draft Proposals. A letter has been received from Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn Town Council supporting the Draft Proposals insofar as they affect that community.

### **Final Proposals**

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