

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) ACT 2015

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

#### *Sections 16 to 24 – Electoral arrangements etc. for the new principal areas*

32. [Sections 16 to 24](#) make provision in respect of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) and the conduct of initial reviews of electoral arrangements for proposed new principal areas. The purpose of an initial review is to make recommendations for the electoral arrangements for a proposed principal area. In undertaking an initial review, the Commission may (as well as making recommendations about electoral arrangements) also propose and recommend changes at a community level, but only where such changes are consequential on what is proposed or recommended for the proposed principal area's arrangements. These provisions apply in relation to authorities merging by voluntary merger under the Act and mergers given effect by other legislation. The Commission's structure and functions are set out in the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 and its role is to keep all local government areas in Wales and the electoral arrangements for the principal areas under review.
33. Currently, under section 29 of the 2013 Act, the Commission can conduct reviews of the electoral arrangements of an *existing* principal area. Section 16 enables the Welsh Ministers to direct the Commission to conduct an initial review of the electoral arrangements of a *proposed* principal area.
34. [Section 16\(1\)](#) enables Welsh Ministers to issue directions to the Commission to carry out initial reviews of a proposed principal area. Subsections (2) to (5) of section 16 provide definitions of key terms used within these sections of the Act. An "initial review" of a proposed principal area is the first such exercise of the Commission in respect of the area concerned. "Relevant consequential changes" are changes to community areas and councils within a principal area. "Electoral arrangements" refers to the number of members in a council and their distribution into electoral wards (or community wards in the case of a community council). Electoral wards may be either "single member" where it is represented by only one councillor or "multi-member" where there is more than one.