

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	12 February 2019
SUBJECT	Annual Reports by Elected Members
PURPOSE	Consider any amendments to the reports and the arrangements for producing them.
AUTHOR	Vera Jones Democratic Services Manager

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Democratic Services Committee is already aware that the Wales Local Government Measure (2011) notes that:

A local authority must make arrangements for:

- each person who is a member of the authority to make an annual report about the person's activities as a member of the authority during the year to which the report relates,
- each person who is a member of the authority executive to make an annual report about the person's activities as a member of the executive during the year to which the report relates, and
- the authority to publish all annual reports produced by its members and by the members of its executive

- 1.2 The purpose of the Annual Reports by Elected Members is to improve communication between Elected Members and the public. The reports are a way of improving the public's understanding of what local members do and the important role that they have and will enable the public to discover information about the activity of their local councillor.
- 1.3 To remind Members, the original guidelines received for publishing annual reports have been included in **Appendix A**.
- 1.4 Committee members will be aware that the annual reports were mentioned extensively in the draft Local Government (Wales) Bill published for consultation on 24th November 2015, which mentioned that creating annual reports would become mandatory.
- 1.5 However, there was no mention of annual reports by elected members in the latest consultation to local government reform (May 2018) in the Green Paper Consultation Document "**Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People**"

- 1.6 Therefore, we continue to await further guidance, and must respond to any requirements when they become clear.

2. ANNUAL REPORTS IN RECENT YEARS

- 2.1 The number of annual reports published have varied over the years and the highest number (39 reports) was in 2014/15. 16 were published in 17/18.
- 2.2 The style of the reports have been amended over the years, based on the observations of members of this committee. Further comments are invited from committee members to prepare and amend for the 18/19 reports.
- 2.3 Additionally, we are also seeking to amend our internal arrangements to facilitate the process of creating the reports. We have already identified different arrangements for the coming year to ensure that the reports are published with ease.
- 2.4 The reports can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Council/Councillors-and-committees/How-the-Council-works/Annual-Reports.aspx>

3. TIMETABLE AND NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 One matter that poses a challenge every year is the timetable. The timetable is usually put together as follows:
- **By the end of April** - Democratic Service officers will correspond with all Council Members to remind them of the guidelines and circulate a template to create the annual report.
 - **By the end of May** - Members are asked to submit draft reports in one language to the Democratic Services for verification. Once the final version is agreed the Service will arrange a translation of the annual report.
 - **By the end of July** - Complete and publish the annual reports on the Council website.
- 3.2 It is fair to note that we have not succeeded in keeping to this timetable in recent years.
- 3.3 However, I believe that clear arrangements are required for the work, including a realistic timetable. Members are asked for comments on the timetable.

4. RECOMMENDATION:

The Democratic Services Committee is requested to:-

- (i) consider the above and propose comments on the procedure