

CARDIFF COUNCIL CYNGOR CAERDYDD

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE:

REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

AGENDA ITEM: 4

ANNUAL REPORTS BY MEMBERS OF A LOCAL AUTHORITY

Reason for this Report

1. This report sets out a draft template for elected Members' Annual Reports for discussion and agreement.

Background

2. Democratic Service Committee on 6th December 2012, considered the draft guidance issued for consultation by the Welsh Government, on Annual Reports by Elected Members. Following this meeting the Interim Head of Democratic Services wrote to the Welsh Government seeking clarification on a number of points (**Appendix A**).
3. Local Authorities must make arrangements enabling members to produce annual reports if they wish and to publicise information about these arrangements to both members and the wider public. This duty is not mandatory.
4. At the meeting on the 6th December there was general agreement that it would be useful to develop a standard template (**Appendix B**) for use by those elected Members who wished to produce an Annual Report outlining their local councillor's activities in the previous municipal year.
5. In developing this template officers reviewed other templates that have been used by other Local Authorities, in particular the work carried out in Bridgend County Borough Council which is supported by the WLGA.
6. Draft guidance on producing annual reports is contained in **Appendix C** for review by Members of the Democratic Services Committee

Reasons for Recommendations

7. To enable the Committee to consider a draft template for the purposes of Annual Reports for the Members of Cardiff Council.

Legal Implications

8. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 includes a requirement for Authorities to provide arrangements for members to make an annual report on their Council activities

Financial Implications

9. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any support given to members in relation to their Annual Reports would be met from existing resources

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

1. provide any comments on the proposed template; and
2. provide any comments to inform the Council's future arrangements for the production and publication of annual reports by members.

ANDREW KERR
INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
February 2013

APPENDIX A: Letter from Chief Operating Officer to Welsh Government on Draft Guidance on Annual Reports – Welsh Government Consultation Document

APPENDIX B: Annual Report Template

APPENDIX C: Annual Reports for Elected Members Guidance note

Appendix A
My Ref: NP/AF

Date: 21 December 2012

Scrutiny, Democracy and Participation Team
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Dear Sir / Madam,

Welsh Government Consultation on Statutory Guidance on Annual Reports

Further to discussions at a meeting of the Council's Democratic Services Committee on 3 December 2012, I am writing to outline a number of comments which have been expressed by the Committee in relation to the draft statutory guidance on the production of annual reports by members of local authorities, which has been published for consultation by the Welsh Government.

The Committee were broadly supportive of the requirement to publish annual reports. They asked for the guidance to include reference to the need for the content of annual reports to be subject to oversight or proof reading by an appropriate third party from within the local authority prior to publication (e.g. the Head of Democratic Services, the Council's Monitoring Officer or a nominated senior officer). This would be to check that, for example, it does not contain information relating to political activities; it is consistent with the Members' Code of Conduct, and does not contravene the Data Protection Act. This will be particularly important in split wards, where the content of an annual report may include information which could be interpreted as critical of another member.

The Committee also queried whether the guidance should allow for joint annual reports to be prepared on a collective basis by a number of ward councillors from the same political group, particularly in those wards where elected members from one political group represents the whole ward.

I trust that you will give these comments your consideration.

Yours faithfully



Andrew Kerr
Chief Operating Officer and Interim Head of Democratic Services



Appendix B
CARDIFF COUNCIL
Annual Report for Elected Members

This is the report by the Councillor below regarding their key activities over the year ending 30th April 2012. It is provided for the information of all constituents and for no other purpose.

Completion instructions:

*Councillors are free to include as much or as little information as they wish in each section, however the report is to be kept to this **2 page (maximum)** format.*

Councillor:

Party:

Ward:

Section 1: Role & Responsibilities

* figures supplied by Cardiff Council

** figures supplied by Councillor

Section 2: Constituency Activity

Section 3: Initiatives and Special Activities

Section 4: Learning & Development

Section 5: Other Activities and Issues

Signature of Councillor:

Date:



Appendix C

CARDIFF COUNCIL

Annual Reports for Elected Members Guidance Notes

Background

Annual reports are intended to provide members of the public with information about their local councillor's activity. Section 5(1)(a) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires local authorities to make arrangements for "each person who is a member of the authority to make an annual report about the person's activities" during the previous municipal year.

Annual reports by Elected Members are a mechanism for improving communication between Councillors and the local electorate.

The Minister for Local Government & Communities, Carl Sargeant, stated that:

'The purpose of introducing Annual Reports is to help improve local people's understanding of what their local Councillor does, and the important role they serve. This is a process that enables a Local Authority to support Councillors and help them to inform their constituents. It will be for each Council to decide on the format for publishing its Annual Reports...'

Cardiff Council's Democratic Services Committee supports the requirement in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and has prepared this guidance note for Members who wish to prepare an annual report to ensure the document is factual, interesting and non-political. The Cardiff Council 'Model' allows Councillors to make comment on 5 specific areas of activity as follows:

- **Role & Responsibilities**
- **Constituency Activity**
- **Initiatives & Special Activities**
- **Learning & Development**
- **Other Activities & Issues**

One of the most important aspects of the Cardiff Model is that it must be no larger than 2 sides of A4 paper. Councillors are encouraged to provide as much or as little information as they wish in each of the sections – without breaking the 2 page rule.

The present interpretation is that local authorities will be expected to provide a format and mechanism for Annual Reports to be published; however the content (in the main) is the responsibility of individual Councillors.

Cardiff Council will arrange to publish Councillors' Annual Reports via links from the Cardiff Council website in June/July each year. This will allow for compilation of annual activity, including attendance at Full Council, Committee Meetings and individual Learning & Development records and will also remove the Annual Report from the window preceding any Local Government Elections, thus providing a 'level playing field' for both incumbent and prospective Councillors.

Role & Responsibilities

Cardiff Council will provide accurate information on the following aspects associated with this section:

- Attendance at Full Council
- Inclusion & Attendance on all Council Committees

Individual Councillors will be expected to provide information on any external bodies or committees that they represent or sit on, including levels of attendance. Individual Councillors should ensure that they personally keep a record of attendance or that the external body/committee can provide accurate records at year end.

Examples of external bodies/committees include the following:

- School Governing Bodies
- Local Community Committees
- Local Authority Consortium Committees
- Special Interest Groups
- Management & Investment Committees

[This list is indicative but not exhaustive]

Constituency Activity

This is where Councillors have an opportunity to identify the work that they have undertaken on behalf of their local constituents. It can include details of regular surgeries held, details of key referrals made to Council departments, together with their outcomes. It can include the support that Councillors have provided to local residents on a range of topics of high interest. No information is provided by Cardiff Council for this section.

Initiatives & Special Activities

This is where Councillors have the opportunity to describe any major initiatives or special projects that they have been associated with on behalf of Cardiff Council which have a direct impact on local constituents. Examples of this could include being part of a working or task and finish group associated with a particular topic or issue, part of a regeneration project, proposals and activity associated with improved leisure facilities for part of the community.

Learning & Development

This is an opportunity for Councillors to demonstrate their appetite for Personal Development over the past year. Examples could include all training workshops attended, attendance at seminars with public interest, ongoing completion of Personal Development Plans (PDP's) and WLGA workbooks that have been undertaken. Cardiff Council will provide a record to each Councillor on the activity that has been undertaken where it has been arranged by the Council. Examples of this would include attendance at WLGA sponsored Leadership Academies, Cardiff Council Induction and Development sessions.
[Once again this list is indicative but not exhaustive]

Other Activities & Issues

This is an opportunity for Councillors to offer information about themselves which they believe would be of interest to their constituents and of which they should be made aware.

Examples of this could include the role they have undertaken in fund-raising events, support for specialist local business or areas of personal special interest (eg support for local sports clubs, events, or organisations). It is an opportunity to show the 'personal' aspect of the role as a local Councillor.

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