

REPORT OF DIRECTOR, GOVERNANCE & LEGAL SERVICES

PROCESS FOR ANNUAL REPORTS BY MEMBERS 2014/15

Reason for this Report

1. This report sets out the process for the preparation of Annual Reports by Members of City of Cardiff Council for 2014/15 municipal year.

Background

2. Under Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, and the Statutory Guidance issued by Welsh Government on 16 May 2013, Local Authorities must make arrangements enabling Elected Members to produce Annual Reports on their Council activities during the previous year. This includes enabling any Cabinet Member to report on their Cabinet activities during the year. The Local Authority must also publicise information about these arrangements to both Members and the wider public.
3. Any reports produced by Members must be published by the Council, but the Council may set conditions / limits on what is included in a report.
4. There is no mandatory duty on Members or Cabinet Members to make an Annual Report on their activities.

Issues

5. On 17 December 2014, the Committee was advised that the Minister for Public Services, Leighton Andrews AM, had written to the Leaders of all Welsh Local Authorities on 6 November 2014 highlighting the wide variation in the numbers of Annual Reports produced by Elected Members across all Welsh Local Authorities in 2013/14.
6. The Assembly Minister believed Members should be encouraged to provide Annual Reports in order to assist good public engagement.
7. The Committee noted that in Cardiff only 7% of Members had produced Annual Reports for 2013/14.

8. The Democratic Services Committee 19 June 2013 agreed a standard Annual Report template for Members to use, reflecting the template provided in the Statutory Guidance. (**Appendix A attached**)
9. The Statutory Guidance (paragraph 1.60 states that the report should contain only factual information relating to the work of the Councillor; should avoid promoting political achievements; be written in the past tense and be limited to two sides of A4. The Council is statutorily prohibited from publishing material which appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party (under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986).
10. Councillors in a multiple Member Ward can produced as a joint annual report should they all agree.
11. In order to facilitate the publication of Members' Annual reports it is proposed that reports should be received by the Committee & Member Services Manager by **4th September 2015** so that they can be cleared by the Monitoring Officer and translated into Welsh for publication on **24 September 2015**. Each report will be published on the Council's website under the Member's profile. Any reports received after this date will be added to the website once cleared and translated.

Reasons for Recommendations

12. To inform all Members of the timetable for publication of Annual Reports for Members for 2014/15 and provide details of the template and guidance to support them in preparing their report.

Legal Implications

13. The relevant legal provisions are set out in the body of the report.

Financial Implications

14. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any council costs incurred as a result in enabling Members to produce Annual Reports will need to be found from within existing resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to note the timetable for consider receipt of Annual Report by Members for 2014/15.

MARIE ROSENTHAL
DIRECTOR, GOVERNANCE & LEGAL SERVICES
8 July 2015

The following appendix is attached to this report:

APPENDIX A: Standard Annual Report Template and Guidance

Background papers

Statutory Guidance from the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 –
Section 5: Annual Reports



CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL

Councillor [Insert Name]

Insert photo

Annual Report 2014/15

This annual report (max. 2 sides of A4 paper) provides details of the key activities undertaken during the year ending 30th April 2013 by the named County Councillor. It is provided for the information of all constituents and for no other purpose.

Councillor:		Political Group / Party:	
Ward:			
<u>Role and Responsibilities</u>			
<u>Ward Activity</u>			
<u>Initiatives and Special Activities</u>			
<u>Learning and Development</u>			
<u>Other Activities and Issues</u>			
Signature of Councillor:		Date:	
<u>Contact Details</u>			
Phone:		Email:	

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CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL

Annual Reports by Councillors

Guidance Notes

Background

Annual reports provide a mechanism for improving communication between Councillors and the local electorate. They aim to improve understanding of the role of local Councillors and the work that they do and enable members of the public to find out more information about the various activities undertaken by their local Councillor(s) during the year.

Local authorities are required to ensure that all their Councillors are able to make an annual report on their council activities during the previous year, should they wish to do so. Cabinet Members are also able to produce a separate annual report on their executive activities.

These guidance notes for the preparation of annual reports by Councillors have been developed in accordance with statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Government in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Format

The Council has developed a standard template for Annual Reports by individual Councillors. All Councillors in a multi-member electoral ward can also produce a joint report should they all agree to do this.

Annual reports produced by Councillors are limited to a maximum of two sides of A4 paper. They should also be written in Arial font and be a minimum 12 point in font size.

Councillors are encouraged to provide as much or as little information as they wish within each section of the annual report. A photo of the Councillor(s) may also be included within the annual report.

Content

The content of annual reports is primarily the responsibility of individual councillors.

Annual reports should:

- include only factual information
- be written in the past tense
- be non-political
- avoid overstating the Councillor's own personal role or influence in any specific matters or achievements

- not include information concerning activities when not operating in his/her role as a Councillor (e.g. speech at political party conference)
- not include information which could be interpreted as critical of another Councillor (e.g. comparison of attendance or activities with that of other councillors)

The Council's standard template for annual reports, allows Councillors to provide information on the following five specific areas of activity:

1. Role and Responsibilities
2. Ward Activity
3. Major Projects and Initiatives
4. Learning and Development
5. Other Activities and Issues

1. Role and Responsibilities

This section should include details (or link to information published by the Council) of membership of standing committees of the Council; appointments by the Council to outside bodies, and attendance at formal meetings of the Council and Committees.

Individual councillors will be expected to provide information on any other external bodies or committees that they represent or sit on, including levels of attendance. Examples of external bodies/committees include school governing bodies; local community committees; special interest groups and management & investment committees. Councillors should ensure that they keep their own personal record of attendance at meetings of such external bodies/committees or that the external body/committee can provide accurate attendance records to them at the end of the year.

2. Ward Activity

This section should outline the work that Councillors have undertaken on behalf of their local constituents, including details of ward surgeries held; details of key referrals made to council departments, and representations made on behalf of electors and the outcomes of these. It can also include the support that Councillors have provided to local residents on a range of topics of specific interest, but should not refer to any personal data or circumstances which could identify any individual. It is not expected that any information for this section will be provided by the Council.

3. Major Projects and Initiatives

This section should outline the Councillor's involvement in local community, county-wide or regional initiatives and projects. It provides an opportunity to describe any major initiatives or special projects that the Councillor has been associated with on behalf of the City of Cardiff Council that have a direct impact on his/her local constituents. Examples include, but are not limited to, involvement in a working group associated with a particular topic or issue; a local regeneration project; proposals and activity associated with improved leisure facilities for part of the community.

4. Learning and Development

This section should contain details of training and development events attended or undertaken, including any e-learning modules which have been completed, as well as any conferences and seminars attended during the previous year. The Council can assist in providing details of each councillor's attendance at training and development sessions which have been organised by the Council (e.g. as part of the Council's annual Member Training and Development Programme).

5. Other Activities and Issues

This section provides the opportunity for Councillors to show the 'personal' aspect of their role as a local Councillor and provide additional information about themselves which they believe would be of interest to their constituents and of which they should be made aware. Examples could include, but are not limited to, the organisation of, and participation in, any local fundraising events and support for other areas of personal special interest (e.g. support for local sports clubs, events or organisations).

Councillors are requested to sign their individual annual reports to confirm that the information which they have provided is accurate.

Publication

Annual reports produced by Councillors must be published by the Council as soon as practicable following the end of the municipal year. Reports for the Municipal Year 2014/15 will be published by 24 September 2015.

This will allow for the inclusion of other information (or web links to information if appropriate) which is published by the Council (e.g. attendance register; details of remuneration and allowances). The Council can also provide appropriate information that is held in councillors' individual training & development records.

All annual reports will be subject to clearance by the Monitoring Officer or his/her nominated representatives who will review the appropriateness of the content prior to publication by the Council on Councillors' individual profile pages on the Council's website.

There is no requirement for any publicity beyond this and any request for any further publicity will be declined unless the same provision is provided for all councillors.

If Councillors wish to reproduce and distribute copies of their own annual report following publication on the Council's website, this would be a matter for the individual Councillor.

The Council will also remove annual reports from the Council's website in the period preceding any local council elections, thus providing a 'level playing field' for both incumbent and prospective Councillors.