

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2018

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

REVIEW OF ELECTED MEMBER ANNUAL REPORTS PROCESS

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 To request that the Democratic Services Committee :
- Consider proposals to update the Annual Reports for Elected Members and the associated reporting process
 - determine that the agreed process be submitted to Council for approval
 - approve the designation of training for Annual Reports as “Recommended for all members”

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 Annual Reports from Elected Members assist in informing the public of the activities they have undertaken in the previous year and which support the following the following Corporate Priorities.

1. **Supporting a successful economy** – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
2. **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council’s priorities.

3. Background.

- 3.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires every Local Authority in Wales to make arrangements for all of their Elected Members to make and publish an Annual Report about their activities.
- 3.2 Bridgend was the leading authority in Wales regarding the development and introduction of Annual Reports. The original template was adapted from the “Luton model” by officers from Bridgend. The template was trialled for suitability and Elected Members assisted in developing the format and guidance for the completion of the report.

- 3.3 The template, exemplar and guidance was presented to the Member Support Officer (MSO) Network, who praised Bridgend on the quality of the final model. The template was adopted as an All-Wales model for Annual Reports. The original Annual Report process included the provision of a template, guidance notes and an exemplar to assist Elected Members when compiling their annual reports.
- 3.4 For its work Bridgend County Borough Council was awarded the The Good Practice and Innovation Award for Member Support and Development by the WLGA in 2013.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 The existing process has been reviewed to reflect changes to the Elected Member information currently available on the BCBC website, the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards and to minimise the resources necessary to create, administer and publish Elected Member Annual Reports in English and in Welsh.
- 4.2 Democratic Services will provide the report template as a word document (**Appendix 1**) to each Elected Member in April each year. The Annual Report Template will be translated into Welsh and provide the framework which will be common to all Annual Reports and used to minimise any other translation costs.
- 4.3 Those Elected Members who wish to produce an Annual Report can then complete the initial draft of their report for the period 1st May of the previous year until 30th April of the current year. Elected members can use the revised guidance (**Appendix 2**) and the sample report (**Appendix 3**) to complete their reports. The initial draft reports will be requested to be returned to Democratic Services by 31 May each year.
- 4.4 Reminders will be provided by Democratic Services for Elected Members to return their completed initial draft reports. It will be assumed that any Elected Member not returning their initial draft report by the 31 May will not be completing an Annual Report for the period.
- 4.5 Councillors are encouraged to provide their information within the 500 word limit to ensure that a consistent approach is established for all Annual Reports.
- 4.6 Democratic Services will review the report and finalise any formatting before returning it to the Elected Member for approval. Any concerns regarding the content of the report will be discussed with the author if necessary or passed to the Group Leaders for review.
- 4.7 The approved reports will be translated and both the English and Welsh report will be linked from the Elected Members profile page on the BCBC website by 01 September each year.
- 4.8 There is no requirement for Elected Members to complete an Annual Report. However, all political groups will be requested to actively promote the completion of Annual Reports by all of their members. Details of the number of Elected Members publishing their annual reports will be provided to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

4.9 Training

4.9.1 It is proposed that the Democratic Services Committee approve that training be provided to all Elected Members in April 2018. The training will advise Elected Members:

- of the need to collect any data for attendance and activities other than any information already identified on the BCBC website which they may wish to be included in their reports.
- of the following publication schedule:

Serial	Event	Date
1.	Democratic Services to circulate report templates to all Elected Members	30 Apr 18
2.	Annual reports for 2017/18 to be drafted by Elected members and returned to Democratic Services	31 May 18
3.	Reports will be finalised by Democratic Services, with any suggested amendments being agreed with the individual member.	30 Jun 18
4.	Copies of the finalised Annual Reports to be reviewed by the Group Leaders (if necessary)	31 July 18
5.	Democratic Services will liaise with Corporate Communications to advertise and promote the publication of the Annual Reports	01 Aug 18
6.	Annual Reports translated into Welsh and published on the BCBC Website	01 Sep 18
7.	Democratic Services advise the IRP of the publication of annual reports as part of the normal reporting process.	30 Sep 18

4.9.2 The Democratic Services Committee is requested to designate this training as “Recommended for all members” as there is no requirement for Members to complete an Annual Report.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules

5.1 There is no effect on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 The publication of the Annual Reports on the BCBC website fulfils our requirement to make the documents available in a bi-lingual format and accessible to those with hearing and visual disabilities.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 For all Elected Members to complete a 500 word Annual Report, the translation costs are likely to be £60 per 1000 words equating to a total of approximately £1,620. This cost would be met from existing budget provisions.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 The Democratic Services Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Consider the amendments to the Annual Report process and the proposed schedule of publication for Annual Reports for 2017/18.
- (2) Note that the Annual Report process will be submitted for approval to Council on 28 March 2018.

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Background documents – None