



Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Democratic Services Committee – 16 April 2018

Review of Councillors Annual Report Template

Purpose:	To review the Councillors Annual Report Template in order to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and removes any duplication of duty.
Policy Framework:	None.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The amended Councillors Annual Report Templates be adopted.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 contains provisions intended to strengthen local democracy. Section 5 requires each Local Authority to ensure that their Councillors are able to make an Annual Report on their Council activities during the previous year. It also enables Cabinet Members to report on their Executive duties. This information is to be published on the Authority's website.
- 1.2 The Authority has made arrangements enabling Councillors to produce Annual Reports; however it is a personal matter for Councillors whether they wish to publish an Annual Report.
- 1.3 The Authority has placed a link to a Councillors Annual Report from the Authority's website detailing information on individual Councillors. Councillors Annual Reports may be viewed at www.swansea.gov.uk/councillors

2. Councillor Annual Report Templates

- 2.1 The Statutory Guidance relating to Councillors Annual Reports is set out in **Appendix A**. The Guidance states that Annual Reports should avoid promoting political achievements, be written in the past tense and limited to 2 sides of A4. The Authority limits a Councillor in receipt of a Civic or Senior Salary to 3 sides of A4 in order to allow them space to outline their special responsibility work.
- 2.2 The Guidance states that “*Annual Reports might be expected to include; Role and responsibilities (membership of internal and external committees, panels, groups and organisations); Constituency Activity; Initiatives and Special Activities, Learning & Development; and Other Activities*”.
- 2.3 On 2 October 2013, the Democratic Services Committee considered this Guidance and recommended that Council adopt a Councillor Annual Report Template.
- 2.4 The template was adopted by Council on 19 November 2013 and at the same time delegated power was given to the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Democratic Services Committee to amend the Councillors Annual Report standard template and associated guidance notes.
- 2.5 The template was later amended slightly to create two templates namely:
 - Councillor Annual Report. For Councillors in receipt of a Basic Salary (**Appendix B**);
 - Councillor Annual Report. For Councillors in receipt of a Civic or Senior Salary (**Appendix C**).
- 2.6 The templates are almost identical. The only difference being the position that they are remunerated for i.e. Civic or Senior Salary is outlined.

3. Review of Councillor Annual Report Templates

- 3.1 A substantial amount of work is required by Officers to populate Section 2 “Councillor Attendance at selected Council Body Meetings” and Section 5 “Learning and Development”. Much of this work is to copy the relevant statistics from the published web page and to reformat it all so that it is readable in MS Word. This is not a good use of Officers time during a period where smarter working is vital. It is therefore proposed to cease populating these areas and in future to simply place the relevant web link in the appropriate section.
- 3.2 The remaining Sections appear to remain valid and useful from a Councillors and member of the public perspective. Councillors’ views are sought relating to improvement / changes.

3.3 As Section 2 “Councillor Attendance at selected Council Body Meetings”, Section 5 “Learning and Development” and Section 7 “Councillors Remuneration” will be pre populated, it is proposed that the Democratic Services Team publish the Councillors Annual Reports in June / July each year regardless of whether a Councillor has completed the other sections. The rationale behind this being that the relevant sections of interest to the public will be listed.

4. Guidance to Councillors on Producing Annual Reports

4.1 These are some quick tips to assist Councillor in producing Councillor Annual Reports.

- 1) Although it is not spelt out in the Guidance, this Authority has defined it to mean a Municipal Year i.e. from the Annual Meeting of Council until the day before the next Annual Meeting of Council.
- 2) Content must be in the past tense.
- 3) Limited to 2 sides of A4 for a Councillor in receipt of a Basic Salary;
- 4) Limited to 3 sides of A4 for a Councillor in receipt of a Civic or Senior Salary;
- 5) Content must avoid promoting political achievements;
- 6) Councillors are advised to compile their Annual Reports throughout the year, as it is so easy to forget the work carried out;
- 7) Annual Reports should be published following any Local Government Election in May, June or July. Although late additions are permissible;
- 8) All Councillor Annual Reports will be translated into Welsh and English prior to being published online.

5. Equality and Engagement Implications

5.1 There are no equality or engagement implications associated with this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

- Appendix A** Statutory Guidance relating to Councillors Annual Reports
- Appendix B** Councillor Annual Report. For Councillors in receipt of a Basic Salary
- Appendix C** Councillor Annual Report. For Councillors in receipt of a Civic or Senior Salary