

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

1 February 2018

### **Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services - K. Jones**

#### **Matter for Decision**

#### **Wards Affected:**

All Wards

#### **Member Annual Report Scheme**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To consult with Members on the current policy to support the production of annual reports by Members of the Council.

#### **Background**

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 introduced a number of statutory requirements to strengthen democracy in Wales. One of the requirements concerned making arrangements for every elected member to provide an annual report at the end of each civic year.
3. The detail of the legal requirement can be found in Section 5 of the 2011 Measure, which states:-

1. A local authority must make arrangements for:
  - a) each person who is a member of the local authority to make an annual report about that person's activities as a Member of the authority during the year to which the report relates;
  - b) each person who is a member of the authority's executive to make a report about the person's activities as a member of the executive during the year to which the report relates, and
  - c) the authority to publish all annual reports produced by its Members and by Members of its executive.
2. The arrangements may include conditions as to the content of a report that must be satisfied by the person making it.
3. A local authority must publicise its arrangements.
4. In exercising its functions under this section a local authority must have regard to any guidance issued by ministers.

### **Current process**

4. In order to support Members in producing their annual reports at the end of the civic year, the content of such reports follows a standard template form.
5. In designing the scheme it was hoped that this would enable Members to strike the right balance between providing information that would be relevant and interesting for their electorate, whilst avoiding the risk that the annual reports became political in nature.
6. The scheme also proposed that annual reports would be published in PDF format on the Councillors' profile page accessed via the corporate website.
7. In a similar vein to the introduction of the Annual Personal Development Review (PDR) scheme, despite initial early interest from Members in completing an annual report this has subsequently declined rapidly over the past four years, with no annual reports being prepared by Members for 2016/17.

8. To assist in the development of the annual reports scheme, it would be of assistance to have an understanding from the Committee of their view of the current process and on how it could be further improved or enhanced.
9. In addition, it must also be pointed out to Members that Welsh Government will, in the new year, publish their proposals on the future reform of Local Government. This will likely take the form of a draft Local Government Bill which may well contain a provision to make the completion of annual reports compulsory for all elected members.

### **Financial Impact**

10. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

11. A screening assessment has been undertaken but a full equality impact assessment is not warranted.

### **Workforce Impacts**

12. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

### **Legal Powers**

13. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (S.5)  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents>

### **Risk Management**

14. There are no significant risks associated with this report.

### **Consultation**

15. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

## **Recommendation**

16. That the Committee engage with the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services as part of a focus group arrangement to review the current Members Annual Report Scheme.

## **Reason for Decision**

17. Welsh local authorities are required to have regard to any guidance issued by Welsh Ministers.
18. To assist with the facilitation of the consultation process in relation to the review of the Members Annual Report Scheme.

## **Implementation of Decision**

19. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call-in period.

## **Appendices**

20. Appendix 1 - Member Annual Report Guidance
21. Appendix 2 - Member Annual Report Submission - Overview Summary

## **List of Background Papers**

22. Democratic Services Committee Papers - 12 December 2012

## **Officer Contacts**

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