
**Report of the:
Democratic Services Committee
A Task and Finish Group to
consider the Annual Report
Scheme for Elected Members.**

July 2018



Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Minute No 6 of the Democratic Services Committee held on 1 February 2018, the nominated Task and Finish Group met on the 29 June 2018 to discuss the Annual Reports Scheme for Elected Members. Members of the Task and Finish Group considered the legislative background and the current Scheme. They also considered the previous participation levels in the scheme in Neath Port Talbot and examples from other Local Authorities.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

In accordance with Minute No 6 of the Democratic Services Committee held on 1 February 2018, the Task and Finish Group met on the 29 June 2018 to discuss the Member Annual Report Scheme. The Group noted that whilst the Authority was required, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, to have a Scheme in place, it was not compulsory for Members to complete one.

Members of the Task and Finish Group considered the Guidance and Template already in place. A copy of the report considered by the Task and Finish Group is attached for Members' information.

The Task and Finish Group considered the ways in which information was disseminated to their constituents, and felt that a range of ways should be offered to Members in addition to the Annual Report such as Newsletters and the use of Social Media.

For information the WLGA was at present developing a Social Media Guide for Members.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title	Members Annual Reports and Annual Development Reviews Task and Finish Group
Reasons for undertaking Inquiry	At the request of the Democratic Services Committee, to research and recommend identify and develop a more suitable scheme.

Intended Outcomes	<p>That a suitable and fit for purpose Annual Development Review Process is developed and put into place for Elected Members for May/June 2019.</p> <p>That a suitable and fit for purpose Members Annual Report Scheme is developed and put into place for Elected Members for May/June 2019.</p>
Background Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Annual Development Review process • Current Annual Report Scheme • Examples of other schemes from different Local Authorities and organisations.
Member Involvement	<p>Councillor J.D.Morgan Councillor S.ap Dafydd Councillor S.K.Hunt Councillor S.Miller</p>
Officer Support	<p>Caryn Furlow Annette Manchipp Stacy Curran</p>
Timeframe	<p>To complete Task and Finish Group work and report back recommendations to the next meeting of the Democratic Services Committee on September 5th 2018.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the design of the current Annual Report Template be improved to make it more dynamic;
2. That Members be reminded of the Scheme and be provided with a copy of the improved template;
3. That training be provided for those Members interested in the use of Social Media, and receive appropriate support including training on analytics;
4. That a tool kit be developed to assist Members in designing their Newsletters.

MEMBERS' ANNUAL REPORT SCHEME

1. Legislative Background and Statutory Guidance
2. Current Annual Report Scheme
3. Previous Participation in Neath Port Talbot
4. Examples of other Annual Report Schemes

1. **Legislative Background**

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.

The detail of the legal requirement can be found in Section 5 of the 2011 Measure, which states:-

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.

The arrangements may include conditions as to the content of a report that must be satisfied by the person making it.

A local authority must publicise its arrangements.

In exercising its functions under this section a local authority must have regard to any guidance issued by ministers.

2. **Current Annual Report Scheme**

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. (Guidance on the completion of Annual Reports is below).

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.

The scheme also proposed that annual reports would be published in PDF format on the Councillors' profile page accessed via the corporate website.

As yet there has been no guidance from Welsh Government indicating that the production of Members' Annual Reports will become compulsory, however this may well be the case going forward.

GUIDANCE

An Annual Report by an elected Member should be concise and limited to two A4 sides. To assist elected Members in preparing an annual report five suggested headings were agreed to assist in focussing the report:

- Role and Responsibilities;
- Community Activity;
- Initiatives and Special Activities;
- Learning and Development; and
- Other Activities and Interests.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Democratic Services Unit will provide accurate information on the attendance of members at full Council and all other Council committees.

Individual Councillors will be expected to provide information on any external bodies that they sit on, including levels of attendance which must be recorded personally. Examples of external bodies/committees could include:

- School Governing Bodies;
- Local Town/Community Councils;
- Local Authority Consortium Committees; and
- Special Interest Groups

This list is indicative and not exhaustive.

Community Activity

This is an opportunity for Councillors to highlight the work they have undertaken on behalf of their local constituents. It should not include details of specific cases. It could include details of regular surgeries they have held and any relevant outcomes. The Democratic Services Unit will not provide any information within this section.

Initiatives and 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 Neath Port Talbot Council.

Learning and Development

Councillors can highlight in this section what Personal Development activities they have undertaken over the previous civic year. Examples can include events such as Council seminars or official training courses. In the future this information will mirror what a Councillor has included within section two of their Personal Development Review.

Other Activities/Interests

This is a general heading for Councillors to provide any information on themselves that they believe will be of interest to their constituents. It can be the opportunity to show the 'personal' aspect of your role as a Councillor.

Democratic Services Officers will be available to read the reports to offer advice on whether any of the content is inappropriate. We anticipate that many Members will wish to produce the content themselves without the need for administrative support.

Guidelines

As with any publication that is in essence linked to the Council there are a number of areas that must be considered when writing annual reports. The next section ensures that elected Members are made aware of potential issues that can or cannot be included within Annual Reports.

In 1986 Parliament imposed controls on Local Authority publicity prohibiting what was described as "political publicity" which appeared to be designed to affect public support for a political party. Also the law made provision for a statutory code of recommended practice to which Local Authorities must have regard in undertaking any publicity. The current Code of Practice for Local Authorities in Wales was issued by the National Assembly for Wales in October 2001.

Officers do not wish to be seen as censors of Members' publications but we have to ensure that anything that is published using public money complies with the Code.

In considering the subject areas of the annual reports, the following matters will be important:-

- i. the reports should be relevant to the functions of the authority;
- ii. it should not duplicate unnecessarily publicity produced by central government, another local authority or another public authority

Comment should be objective, balanced, informative, and accurate and issues must be presented clearly and as fairly as possible.

The reports may include information about individual Councillors only where this is relevant to their position and responsibilities within the Council and all

With the use of Communities First funding I oversaw the
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. I was also able to
receive funding to oversee the
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

I am continuing to work on the regeneration of
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. I hold a regular surgery on a
Saturday Morning and carry out street surgeries most days.

I also attend Community P.A.C.T Meetings.

Initiatives and Special Activities:

During the year as a County Borough Councillor I have been involved in :

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Learning and Devolvment:

In the previous Civic Year I have attended a large number of seminars and training
sessions on a wide cross-section of important topics including
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
I have also undertaken training in XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Other Activities and Interests:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXX

3. Previous Participation in Neath Port Talbot

Despite initial early interest from Members in completing an annual report this has subsequently declined rapidly, with no annual reports being prepared by Members for 2016/17 and 2017/18. (See below).

MEMBER	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18
A. Carter	X	X				
A.P.H.Davies	X	-				
J. Dudley	X	-				
M. Ellis	X	X				
J. Evans	X	X		X		
M. Harvey	X	-		X		
H. James	X	-	X			
A. Jenkins	X	-				
D. Jones	X	-				
E.E. Jones	X	X	X			
M. Jones	X	-				
R. Jones	X	X	X	X		
C. Morgans	X	-				
K. Pearson	-	X				
S. Penry	X	X	X	X		
P.Rees	-	-	X	X		
J. Rogers	-	X				
A. Taylor	-	X				
R. Thomas	X	-				
D. Whitelock	X	-				
L. Williams	X	-				
A.Woolcock	X	X	X	X		
TOTALS	18	10	6	6	0	
% of Council	28%	16%	9%	9%	0%	

4. **Examples of other Annual Report Schemes**

a. Bridgend County Borough Council

b. City and County of Swansea