

Report To: Democratic Services Committee

Date of Meeting: 14 November 2013

Lead Officer: Gary Williams, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Report Author: Steve Price, Democratic Services Manager

Title: Annual Reports by Members

1. What is the report about?

To strengthen local democracy, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 contains provisions requiring local authorities to make arrangements to enable all their members to make annual reports on their council activities.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

Denbighshire's councillors are currently completing annual reports and it is therefore timely for the Democratic Services Committee to discuss and review progress. Welsh Government Statutory Guidance is attached as appendix 1.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Democratic Services Committee considers and comments on the arrangements and progress in respect of annual reports by members.

4. Report details.

4.1 The Measure requires each local authority to have arrangements for every member to make an annual report on their activities in their role as councillor and to publish all those reports; with publishing arrangements applying equally to all Members. Annual reports will be published on the Council's website.

4.2 The Statutory Guidance allows local authorities to place restrictions on the contents of the reports which should be factual and likely to be centred on meetings, events, conferences, training and development. In December 2012 the Committee requested that a template be prepared with appropriate areas (e.g. Attendance at meetings). In accordance with this a template has been circulated to all members to enable the production of annual reports and a blank template is appended as appendix 2. Figures on the number of annual reports returned to date will be reported verbally to the Committee at the meeting.

4.3 As there are certain limitations to what can be included in an annual report, there will need to be a review or editing stage before publication, to ensure that the contents conform to Statutory Guidance and any restrictions placed by the Council.

The Committee's views on this process is invited, for example whether or not group leaders have a role for members of their groups,

4.4

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The issues covered in this report are statutory requirements but the intentions behind them would be appropriate for the Council's priority area *Modernising The Council To Deliver Efficiencies And Improve Services For Our Customers*.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

Supporting the production and publication of annual reports by members will result in additional work for supporting officers but the impact can be contained within existing resources.

7. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others, and has an Equality Impact Assessment Screening been undertaken?

A consultation on annual reporting requirements with the Democratic Services Committee was undertaken in December 2012 in response to the release of draft statutory guidance. No equality implications have been identified as a result of this report.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

Not required for this report.

9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

New, additional activities such as the arrangements to support annual reports reduce the overall capacity available to support local democracy.

10. Power to make the Decision

Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.