

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 5 th October 2016
Report Subject	Review of the New Report Format
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management
Report Author	Member Engagement Manager
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the spring and summer of 2015, we carried out a review of our report format, which resulted in a new format being recommended for adoption from the autumn. This was the subject of a report to this committee at its 7th October 2015 meeting. The purpose of this report is to update the committee following a year of using the new format. The feedback received from Members and Officers has been very positive and so only a slight change is required at present. The change will be to the guidance on completion of the Risk Management section. It is suggested that the report format will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it is still as effective as possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That we continue to use the new report format, but evaluate it on an annual basis, reporting back to the Constitution Committee as necessary.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REVIEW
1.01	The report format which we had used for several years had ceased to be as effective as we needed it to be. With a greater workload for Members than we have ever had before, it was vital that we made our reporting more accessible and both easier and quicker to read.
1.02	The new report format was piloted at the September 2015 meeting of the Cabinet and rolled out across Council and all committees during the autumn. As part of this process, a report was submitted to this committee on 7 th October and the new format supported.
1.03	The new format benefits the reader by having an executive summary and the recommendations on the front page. Another innovation which has been very well received is the glossary of terms at the end of each report.
1.04	During the last year, whilst we have made some slight adjustments to the format and guidance notes, resulting in a two page 'help sheet' for report authors being prepared before recess.
1.05	As part of the review process, we felt that it would be beneficial to canvass Members to gauge their opinion of the new format one year on. We did this by seeking the views of Members at Overview & Scrutiny committees held during September.
1.06	As a result of that informal feedback, it was pleasing to note that Members were very supportive of the new format. One member felt that too many acronyms were being used, but acknowledged that these were terms which used in full when first mentioned and also defined within the glossary. Following the recent Equalities Workshops, Members have suggested that it is important to demonstrate what Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA) have been undertaken. The current guidance is that this will be reflected in the Risk Management Section. However in the previous format, there was an Equalities Impact section which encouraged officers to ensure that EIAs were undertaken. This can be addressed by revising the guidance on completion of the Risk Management Section.
1.07	On the basis of that degree of support, it is recommended that we continue to use the new report format, but evaluate it on an annual basis, reporting back to the Constitution Committee as necessary.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The new report format has had a positive impact in reducing both Member and Officer time in preparing and reading reports.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Publication of this report is part of the consultation on this issue.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Reports in the new format have been found to be easier to use.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Report of the Member Engagement Manager to the Constitution Committee 7th October 2015 and the resultant minute,</p> <p>Contact Officer: Robert Robins, Member Engagement Manager Telephone: (01352) 702320 E-mail: Robert.robins@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	EIA Equalities Impact Assessment