

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday, 9 April 2018
Report Subject	Councillors' Annual Reports
Report Author	Deputy Monitoring Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As required by Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the Council made arrangements for the publication of annual reports by its Members in accordance with guidance issued under the Measure (the Guidance). This matter was last reported to the Committee in February 2016 and it was resolved that a report would be brought back to the Committee by way of an update as part of its Forward Work Programme. The report makes recommendations for reminding Members of the arrangements regarding annual reports.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To remind Members of the Council of the arrangements for publication of annual reports by circulating, by email, the template (attached as appendix A) to this report to Members, and referring them to the Guidance; and
2	To request those Members who choose not to produce an annual report to confirm if they have produced their own newsletters and inform the Monitoring Officer of the frequency of such newsletters within the past twelve months.
3	To carry out the reminder and request set out at paragraph 1 and 2 of this recommendation on an annual basis.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	
1.01	In February 2016 a report was taken to this Committee outlining, in summary, the following matters at paragraphs 1.02 to 1.05 of this report:
1.02	In 2012 the Council prohibited the use of Council resources for the production of Councillor newsletters.

1.03	<p>On 17 July 2013 the Democratic Services Committee resolved:</p> <p>(a) That the following conditions be imposed as part of the arrangements under Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011:</p> <p>(i) That annual reports by Members must comply with the statutory guidance including the standard template referred to in paragraph 1.6 of that guidance.</p> <p>(ii) That the contents of the annual report are not defamatory in the opinion of the Council's Monitoring Officer</p> <p>(b) That there are sufficient arrangements for publishing the annual reports and publicising their availability if they are published on the appropriate part of the Council's website and their availability publicised on it.</p>
1.04	<p>Since July 2013 there has been little interest in, or take up of, annual reports.</p>
1.05	<p>By contrast, Councillors are (anecdotally) known to be regularly producing their own newsletters.</p>
1.06	<p>At the meeting on the 8 February 2016 the Committee, in light of the above, resolved that the current arrangements for Councillor newsletters and annual reports were sufficient and do not require amendment, and that all Councillors be asked to confirm whether they produce or contribute to newsletters or any other regular communications. It was further resolved that, as part of the Forward Works Programme, a report would be taken back to the Committee by way of an update on these matters.</p>
1.07	<p>However, although the Council have arrangements in place for Members to prepare annual reports, it is good practice to periodically remind Members of those arrangements. In the calendar year 2016, there were seven annual reports published on the Council's website, but no annual returns were published in 2017. As the local elections took place in 2017, it may also be a good time to remind new and returning members of the arrangements that are in place for publication by the Council of Members' Annual reports.</p>
1.08	<p>Circulating the Guidance and the template report by email, as a reminder to Members of those arrangements, assists the Council to make best use of the arrangements that are in place.</p>
1.09	<p>Requesting, in the same email, that those Members who produce their own newsletters confirm this information in response, and also confirm the frequency of such newsletters within the last 12 months, should provide clear data on the number of Councillors producing their own newsletters and their frequency.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	N/A

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	N/A

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	N/A

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A - Template Annual Report. Appendix B – Annual Reports by Members of a Local Authority - Guidance.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/A Contact Officer: Matthew Georgiou, Deputy Monitoring Officer Telephone: 01352 702330 E-mail: matthew.georgiou@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None