

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE **MEETING**

3.30 PM Monday, 25TH MARCH, 2013
COUNCIL CHAMBER

This agenda has been prepared by the Democratic Services Department. Any member of the public requiring information should contact the department on (01685) 725203 or email democratic@merthyr.gov.uk.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members of the Democratic Services Committee are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct.

3. Annual Reports by Councillors

To consider a report of the Chief Executive **(Pages 1 - 8)**

4. Any Other Business Deemed Urgent by the Chair

COMPOSITION:

Councillor Richard Thomas (Chair)
Councillor G Jones (Vice-Chair)
Councillors: T Chaplin, G Davies, N Greer, D L Jarrett,
C T Jones, G Lewis, L A Matthews, K Moran

together with appropriate officers

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Agenda Item 3

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Civic Centre, Castle Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8AN

Main Tel: 01685 725000

www.merthyr.gov.uk

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT



Date Written	12 th March 2013
Report Author	Ann Taylor
Service Area	Legal and Democratic
Committee Date	25 th March 2013

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORTS

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: To request Members' approval on the structure of the template for the first round of Annual Reports by Councillors.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Part 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 ("the Measure") contains provisions for the production of annual reports by individual elected members.
- 1.2 The intention of the publication of these reports is to strengthen local democracy by providing the public with a clearer understanding of what it is their local Councillor does.
- 1.3 The first reports are to be published no later than the end of June 2013 to cover each Councillor's previous twelve months in office.

2.0 DUTIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND INDIVIDUAL COUNCILLORS

- 2.1 Local Authorities are expected to provide a format for the collection of information for the Annual Reports and a means by which to publish them.
- 2.2 The Democratic Services department will assist Councillors as much as possible in the presentation of these reports.

- 2.3 Councillors must be responsible for the factual content of their individual report, including statistics that are not directly available to the Democratic Services Department.

3.0 CONTENT OF REPORTS

- 3.1 Whilst each local authority is free to set certain conditions on what is included in their reports, care must be taken to ensure that they are factual and non-political.
- 3.2 At the last Democratic Services meeting on 11th February 2013, it was resolved that a working group be convened to consider the structure of the report template in more detail.
- 3.3 The working group met on 5th March 2013 taking care to bare in mind comments made by the Minister for Local Government and Communities that the information “assists people’s understanding of what their Local Councillor does and the important role they serve”.
- 3.4 Also taken into consideration was the Measure’s guidance that the report include details relating to:
- § membership of committees and outside bodies, attendance records for these and full council.
 - § surgeries held, representations made on behalf of electors and the results of these.
 - § involvement in local, county or regional initiatives or projects.
 - § training and development events attended or undertaken, conferences and seminars attended.
- 3.5 The final template incorporating all changes are attached at Appendix One, and the guidance notes are attached at Appendix Two.

4.0 PUBLICATION OF REPORTS

- 4.1 The minimum requirement for publication of the reports is inclusion on the authority’s website.
- 4.2 The Working Group also suggested that a notice be placed in the authority’s Contact magazine drawing the public’s attention to the fact that the reports have been published.
- 4.3 The reports will be based on each Councillor’s annual activity during a municipal year, which allows for continuity of roles in line with any changes in responsibility agreed at Annual Council.
- 4.4 For 2012/2013, however, this will also include the period the day each Councillor signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office and the first Annual Council meeting on Wednesday 16th May 2012.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The IT infrastructure required to publish the Annual Reports is already in place, so there are no financial implications resulting from its introduction.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION(S) that

6.1 The template for the compilation of information for Councillor's Annual Reports is agreed.

6.2 The template is distributed to all Councillors for completion by no later than Monday 17th June 2013 ahead of the deadline for publication at the end of June 2013.

6.3 The publication of the Annual Reports is advertised in the authority's Contact magazine.

**GARETH CHAPMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
<i>Title of Document(s)</i>	<i>Document(s) Date</i>	<i>Document Location</i>
Report to Full Council - Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011	10 October 2012	Democratic Services
Statutory Guidance from the Local Government Measure 2011	June 2012	Democratic Services
Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011	May 2011	Democratic Services
Report of the Councillor Commission Expert Panel Wales "Are we being served?"	2009	Democratic Services
Local Government Act 2000	2000	Democratic Services

Consultation has been undertaken with Executive Board in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council



COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2012 / 2013

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council operates under executive arrangements. Responsibility for the authority's functions is overseen by a Leader and Cabinet made up of Councillors from the party or group with the most members. The allocation of Chair and Vice Chair posts is also based by law on the number of seats each party or group has, and this number again will have influence on the appointment of Councillors to outside bodies.

Opinions, advice, conclusions and other information in this report shall be understood as neither given nor endorsed by the authority or on its behalf. It is a report by the Councillor referred to below regarding their key activities over the period from the day they signed their Declaration of Office in 2012 up to and including 14th May 2013. It is provided for the information of constituents and for no other purpose.

Councillor:	NAME
Political Party:	(PARTY)
Electoral Division:	(WARD)

Committee Membership, Roles and Attendance

This section relates to membership as an elected member, not in a personal capacity. Democratic Services has provided information on committee membership and attendance for Council Committees. However, where Councillors are a member of any other committees, they have provided details from their own records.

Council committees:

List of the Committees and attendance details to be provided by Democratic Services

Local Authority Panels:

List of the Panels and the attendance details to be provided by the Councillor

External Committees and Outside Bodies:

Democratic Services will provide the titles of the Outside Bodies, but the Cllr will have to include attendance details. All details relating to any other external bodies they attend as a representative of the local authority.

My Work as a Portfolio Member

This section will only be included in the document that is sent to the 6 Cabinet Members

There are six elected members with Executive roles who sit on Cabinet. The Leader chairs the committee and each of the others has responsibility for a specific portfolio of services. This section has identified the role of the individual Councillor and work undertaken in that role.

Portfolio for Democratic Services will put in the title of the Cllr's portfolio:
See guidance notes

My Work as a Local Councillor

This section must be completed by all Councillors, including Cabinet Members
Under this heading, Councillors have identified the work undertaken on behalf of local constituents. Reference has also been made to any major initiatives or special projects they have been associated with on behalf of MTCBC, which have a direct impact on local constituents.

See guidance notes

Learning and Development

In the Learning and Development section, Councillors have demonstrated instances where they have taken the opportunity for personal development by taking part in initiatives and events aimed at improving their understanding and awareness.

I have taken part in the following Learning and Development initiatives during the past year:

See guidance notes

I have attended the following pre-Council Presentations:

See guidance notes

Other Activities and Issues

Under this heading, Councillors have provided information on themselves to demonstrate the 'personal' aspect of their role as a local Councillor which they believe would be of interest to constituents.

See guidance notes

Date: _____

GUIDANCE NOTES

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2012 / 2013



The Councillor's Annual Report is a mechanism for improving communication between Councillors and the local electorate. The document must be factual, interesting and non-political.

The Democratic Services Committee has agreed a structured model template allowing Councillors to make comment on specific areas of activity:

- Committee Membership, Roles and Attendance
- My Work as a Portfolio Member (*where applicable*)
- My Work as a Local Councillor
- Learning and Development
- Other Activities and Issues

One of the most important aspects of the Model is that it must be no larger than 4 sides of A4 paper (5 sides of A4 for Portfolio Members). Councillors are encouraged to provide as much or as little information as they wish in each of the sections – without breaking this rule.

Whilst the Local Authority has a responsibility to provide a format and mechanism for Annual Reports to be published; the content (in the main) is the responsibility of individual Councillors. An example is attached for your information, but please note:

- The content should be factual and non-political;
- Your comments should be written in the past tense to reflect your previous 12 months in office;
- We suggest that you use short, sharp, sentences rather than embellished paragraphs;
- Try to avoid using specific numbers e.g. *"I dealt with 45 constituent queries"*, as this does not demonstrate that some of these were simple to assist with, whilst others could potentially involve work over a number of months. You could include something along the lines of *"I support individuals on a wide range of issues and continue to invite constituents to contact me on matters of concern"*.

Other than the first section (i.e. Committee Membership, Roles and Attendance) which must be completed - where Councillors do not include any

information in a particular section, the heading for that section will be removed from their report prior to publication.

Arrangements will be made to publish Councillors' Annual Reports via the MTCBC website in June/July each year. The links will, however, be removed preceding any Local Government Elections in order to ensure a 'level playing field' for both incumbent and prospective Councillors.

Committee Membership, Roles and Attendance

This section relates to your membership as an elected member and representative of the local authority, not a personal capacity. Democratic Services will provide information on committee membership and attendance for Council Committees. However, where Councillors are a member of any other committees, they will be expected to provide information from their own records.

The section is broken down into three areas

- Council committees, e.g.
 - Full Council
 - etc.
- Local Authority Panels, e.g.
 - Member Development Panel
 - etc.
- External Committees and Outside Bodies
 - South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
 - etc.

My Work as a Local Councillor

Councillors have an opportunity here to identify the work that they have undertaken on behalf of their local constituents. It is also the section where elected members can refer to any major initiatives or special projects that they have been associated with on behalf of MTCBC which have a direct impact on local constituents. e.g. details of:

- regular surgeries held;
- key referrals made to Council departments together with their outcomes;
- support that Councillors have provided to local residents on a range of topics of high interest;
- any major initiatives or special projects that they have been associated with on behalf of MTCBC which have a direct impact on local constituents, such as being part of a working party associated with a particular topic or issue.

Learning and Development

In this section, Councillors can demonstrate their appetite for Personal Development over the past year. Examples could include all training workshops attended, attendance at seminars with public interest, e-learning modules that have been completed, and attendance at presentations prior to Full Council.

Other Activities & Issues

This is an opportunity for Councillors to offer information on themselves which they believe would be of interest to their constituents.

Examples of this could include promotion of Welsh Language Skills across the local community, the role that they have undertaken in fund-raising events, support for specialist local business or areas of personal special interest (eg support for local sports clubs, events, or organisations). It is the opportunity to show the 'personal' aspect of your role as a local Councillor.

*If you have any questions or require support completing the Annual Report,
Democratic Services are able to offer assistance.*

***Please do not leave it too late to begin, as the reports must be published
by June 2013.***