

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Meeting: | Standards Committee |
| Date: | 14 June 2023 |
| Title of report: | Elected Members' Annual Reports |
| Report by: | Head of Democracy |
| Purpose of Report: | To update the Committee on annual report arrangements for 22/23 |

Background

1. A report was presented to the Standards Committee in its meeting on 14 December outlining the arrangements and the timeline for receiving and publishing members' annual reports for 2022/23.
2. Following the low number of reports that were presented for the 21/22 period, the Committee requested that Democratic Services take steps to encourage and facilitate the process of preparing reports for 22/23.
3. Section 5 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty on Councils to ensure that arrangements are in place to enable Members to prepare annual reports on their activities. Although there is no statutory requirement for Members to prepare a report, it is good practice so as to promote local accountability and as a way of presenting information on their roles and responsibilities.
4. In accordance with Welsh Government statutory guidance on annual reports made under the Local Government Measure (2011), the Council has adopted a reporting template to facilitate the task for members. The template follows the recommendations of the guidance and includes the following headings:
 - Role and responsibilities
 - Ward activity
 - Initiatives and special activities
 - Learning and development

- Other activities and issues

Annual Reports Arrangements 22/23

5. The reports are published on the Council's website in the section that provides information on elected members. Only 4 reports were submitted for the 2021/22 period. The May 2022 local elections had an impact on the situation along with job vacancies and capacity issues in Democratic Services at the time.
6. In order to prepare effectively for 22/23 and to raise the awareness of new elected members, the following messages were circulated:
 - 14 July 2022 – e-mail to all elected members explaining the process and timetable and including a copy of the annual report template.
 - 2 February 2023 – briefing with group leaders on the process and timetable for preparing reports.
 - 15 February 2023 – e-mail to all elected members to remind them of the process and deadline and including a copy of the template. It was also explained how to get in touch with Democratic Services with any questions.
 - 31 March 2023 – a reminder was included in the Standards Committee newsletter to all members with a link to the template (the template was published on the Council's Monitor intranet).
 - 17 May 2023 – e-mail to all elected members to remind them of the process and deadline and including a copy and link to the template.
 - 2 June 2023 – e-mail to all elected members with a final request for reports.
7. Members were asked to send their reports to Democratic Services by 26 May 2023. In order to give members every opportunity to respond, the deadline was extended, and the final reports were received on 6 June. The reports will need to be reviewed and translated to ensure consistency. We aim to publish the reports on the Council's website by the end of June.
8. A total of 19 out of 35 reports (54%) have been received for 2022/23. Although this is a significant increase on 21/22, as mentioned in paragraph 5 above, there were exceptional circumstances last year. It is more accurate to compare with 2020/21 when 16 out of 30 reports (53%) were submitted.

Next steps

9. The information in this report will be presented to the Democratic Services Committee on 28 June and there will be a discussion in a group leaders' meeting in June.

10. Although presenting an annual report is considered good practice, it is not a statutory requirement, so ensuring a high proportion of responses is challenging. In order to make the process as easy and efficient as possible, over the next few weeks Democratic Services officers will consider further steps, including:
 - Further discussions with individual members to understand any barriers.
 - Discussion with other County Councils to identify good practice / lessons learnt.
 - Develop the template to ensure that it is as easy as possible to use.

Recommendation

11. The Standards Committee is requested to consider the contents of this report.

