



Llais Cynghorau Cymuned a Thref yng Nghymru
The Voice of Community and Town Councils in Wales

Nodyn Datblygu Ymarfer 4

Practice Development Note 4

Adroddiad Blynyddol: Amserlen Camau

Annual Report: Timetable of Actions

Dyddiad Cyhoeddi Ebrill 2024

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OVW Practice Development Note 4

Annual Report: Timetable of Actions

A simple guide for Community and Town Councils

Action	Purpose	Timescale	At-a-glance timescale
1. Introduction			
1.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 delivers a package of reforms to strengthen and extend the powers available in local government. Guidance has been published in relation to these arrangements.	A good annual report will help increase awareness of the existence of Community and Town Councils and their work within their communities and engage with communities.	Section 52 of the 2021 Act requires Councils, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year, to prepare and publish an annual report about the Council's priorities, activities, and achievements over the previous year. Reports should be published as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each	May?

Action	Purpose	Timescale	At-a-glance timescale
Chapter Four refers to Annual Reports.		<p>financial year. Perhaps take it to Annual Council?</p> <p>Discuss it with Members first though, perhaps take it to committee or arrange an informal working group to consider the report before submission to the Council.</p>	

Action	Purpose	Timescale	At-a-glance timescale
2. Constructing the Annual Report			
2.1 Don't wait until 31 March to think about the Annual Report. Think about it during the year. What has the Council achieved? What are	The Annual Report is an opportunity to showcase the work of the council, reflecting on the past year's activity and	Think about the content throughout the year. Perhaps a quarterly report to Members to review progress?	Ongoing

<p>the areas where progress has been slower than you had hoped? Are you able to show progress against key objectives?</p>	<p>to look ahead to its plans for the coming year.</p>		
<p>2.2 Think of the Annual Report as like painting the Forth Bridge. You should be reviewing progress against previous reports year-on-year.</p>		<p>Keep progress under review. The Annual Report is more than just a tick-box exercise.</p>	<p>Why not start to think about next year's report while preparing the budget? You might want to make financial provision to meet some objectives next year.</p>
<p>2.3 Content is key. There is no template for an annual report as the format will reflect what your Council does. The statutory guidance gives good advice on content. Think about setting objectives, possibly linking these to the seven</p>	<p>The report can only reflect how the council is working and what it is achieving. This is reflected in the legislation and guidance. If the council has a strategy and a plan, and follows the five ways of working etc, then this naturally flows into the Annual Report.</p>		

<p>Well-being goals perhaps, reference the five ways of sustainable working. Think about using performance measures; are you using SMART indicators – measures which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound? Defining these parameters as they relate to your goal helps ensure that your objectives are attainable within a certain time frame. The Finance & Government toolkit for Community & Town Councils will help you adopt a strategic approach.</p>	<p>If the Council isn't acting according to any strategic plan, then this may come through in the Annual Report.</p>		
<p>2.4 Reports vary in length, content, and presentation style but largely cover most of the items in paragraph 4.10 of the guidance.</p>			

<p>2.5 Community and Town Councils are also required to prepare and publish other reports, relating to areas such as biodiversity (Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016) and, for some Councils, Well-being (Section 40 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015).</p> <p>Councils can choose whether to prepare separate reports or combine these into a single report.</p>	<p>To comply with statutory requirements and present a cohesive commentary on strategic and operational activity.</p>	<p>Community and Town Councils must prepare and publish a plan every three years setting out how they propose to maintain and enhance biodiversity. The first report was due before the end of 2019, with all subsequent reports due for publication before the end of every third year after 2019.</p> <p>The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires some Councils to publish a report annually on the progress made in meeting the local wellbeing objectives in its area. The relevant councils are those with an annual turnover of £200,000 or more in the three financial years prior to the local well-being plan being published.</p>	<p>Every third year from 2019.</p> <p>Annually for some Councils. Why not combine this with your Annual Report?</p>
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3. Publication of the Annual Report

Action	Purpose	Timescale	At-a-glance timescale
<p>3.1 Publication of your Annual Report should be consistent with the wider approach to publication of council papers in Schedule 4 of the 2021 Act, i.e. that the report is published electronically on your website.</p> <p>3.2 If your Council has adopted a Welsh Language Scheme, you may have made a commitment through the Scheme to publish the Annual Report bilingually. Where no such scheme has been adopted, Councils are</p>	<p>To ensure compliance with statutory requirements.</p>	<p>There is no stipulated timeline for publication of the Annual Report. It is suggested that publication takes place as soon as possible after approval.</p>	<p>As soon as possible after approval by the Council.</p>

may in event publish bilingually as appropriate.			
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Some key tips:

- The [statutory guidance](#) is comprehensive. One Voice Wales has not sought to duplicate this advice. This note is an ‘at-a-glance’ guide to good practice, with helpful suggestions to supplement the statutory guidance.
- There are examples of Best Practice all over Wales. [Pontypool Community Council](#) received the award for Best Annual Report at the 2024 One Voice Wales Awards. [Criccieth Town Council](#), a small Council in North Wales, was Highly Commended for their work in the same category. [New Radnor Community Council](#), a small Council in Powys, was also recognised for its work.
- Some Councils use the Annual Report to describe their governance arrangements (which is encouraged by the guidance) and seek the views of the public on spending and priorities. [Radyr and Morganstown Community Council](#) in Cardiff did that. Does the simple contents page help you think of a template for your report?
- Think about how best to publicise your Annual Report. In Presteigne and Norton Town Council, in Powys, Members decided not to print copies of the report for each household, believing that this was not a sustainable, green solution. Instead printed copies are available in three local libraries and the local shop. A copy is on the [website](#) for downloading and a printed copy is provided on request. Notice of publication is on the village noticeboards and the public are made aware that they can ask for a printed copy.
- If your Council is on social media, use your pages to raise awareness of the Annual Report. Try and create a dialogue with the public. “Tag” key organisations who are active in your area.
- Finally, don’t forget to consider submitting your Annual Report as an entry for the 2025 One Voice Wales National Awards!