

Annual Reports

A Councillor's Guide

Why produce an Annual Report?

There is an expectation on all Kirklees Councillors to produce and publish an Annual Report summarising their activity during each municipal year.

Producing an Annual Report is not compulsory; however, it has been recommended by the Members' Allowances Independent Review Panel and should be viewed as good practice by individual Councillors and Political Groups.

The Council website will no longer be used to host reports but will provide a link to reports using agreed guidance outlined in this note. All Councillors and groups will be supported to develop political spaces (if they don't have them already) where Annual Reports can be posted. Group Support & Development officers can assist with posting the reports, if required, and will provide a link to this space on the Council website (with an appropriate disclaimer). Officers can have a role in progress chasing reports, which are usually published in July, but will not be responsible for policing or editing the content. Councillors may seek advice and guidance from Officers should they require.

An Annual Report can be as extensive or as brief as you want it to be. Ideally, it should give a flavour of what has happened over the last 12 months in office.

What could you include?

Typically an Annual Report should summarise the following:

- Your participation/attendance at Council Meetings and Council Committees (e.g. Planning, Scrutiny, etc) during the year.
- Your participation/attendance, where applicable, at meetings of 'outside bodies' (e.g. Fire Authority, Police Authority, etc).
- Ward work undertaken during the year. (Typically this may simply state the number of enquiries dealt with or it may detail specific projects undertaken.)
- Localities work you have been specifically involved in during the year.
- Political Group involvement/activities, where applicable, undertaken.
- Councillor development and training undertaken (e.g. leadership courses, development sessions, service briefings attended and shadowing activities undertaken). Your Group Business Manager should be able to provide you with a list of all the development activities you have undertaken in the last municipal year.

The annual report can also be used to publicise other things:

- Specific issues/interests (e.g. local action groups).
- Surgeries held in the ward (including attendance levels and activities generated).
- Links to personal websites, blogs and twitter may also be included.

What should not be included?

There are some key considerations for Councillors to follow when producing content. These include:

- Not being critical of officers or others who are unable to respond.
- Personal criticism.
- Defamatory comments.
- Breaching confidentiality and data protection.

In all instances, Councillors are bound by the Code of Conduct.

Summary: Why should you produce an Annual Report?

If used sensibly, your Annual Report is a useful tool to help you promote yourself, say who you are and spell out what you have done or intend to do. It can be written in a regimented format which is easily updated from one year to the next, or it could be laid out as a chronology of what you have done during the course of the year and there are no restrictions on format.