



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH JULY 2011

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PRINTING OF COUNCIL AGENDAS AND REPORTS

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To outline alternative proposals for the printing of council agendas and reports.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

2.1 The Council is required to respond to challenging funding settlements over the next few years and efficiency savings must be identified to ensure the continued delivery of key frontline services. The Council has set a target of reducing carbon emissions by 45% and any reduction of printed material would have positive environmental impact.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The current system for the printing of council agendas and reports has been in place since the formation of the Council in 1996. This report reviews the current system and outlines options for the future.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 The Council is required to make agendas and reports publically available at least 3 clear working days before a meeting of full council or a council committee. In order to comply with our statutory obligations copies of all agendas and reports are available for public inspection from the Council's main offices; Penallta House, Pontllanfraith House and Tredomen House. In more recent times the Council has also published agendas and reports on its intranet and website. This improves transparency in the Council's decision-making processes and enhances the public's access to agendas and reports.

4.2 Those directly involved in council meetings, including; Members, officers and co-opted Members, as well as certain key stakeholders such as GAVO and Assembly Members, receive printed copies of committee papers. An overview of the current distribution of committee papers is given below:

- **Councillors** - receive copies of agendas and reports for all council meetings, regardless of whether they are members of a committee.
- **Partners and Co-opted Members** - who have membership of a council committee, receive copies of appropriate agendas and reports by post.
- **Local Press** – receive copies of agendas and reports for all council meetings.

- **Officers** – All Directors, Heads of Service and certain third tier officers receive a variety of council papers.

4.3 For 2008/09 the Council spent £22,655 (estimated at £27,186 for 2011/12) providing printed copies of council agendas and reports. Any reform of the current arrangements should produce real efficiencies and not result in printing costs being 'bumped' from the Democratic Services central printing budget to directorate multifunctional and personal printers. In addition, those who serve on council committees should continue to have ready access to agendas and reports to ensure they can fully prepare for a meeting.

4.4 The following options exist for the printing of council agendas and reports:

OPTION 1 – TARGET ACTIVE MEETING PARTICIPANTS

4.5 This option involves targeting copies of agendas and reports to meeting participants. This group includes Members and co-opted members that serve on a committee, Corporate Management Team, Monitoring/Deputy Monitoring Officer, Head of Corporate Finance, Committee Services Officers and a limited number of officers that provide support to specific committees, for example, Licensing Officers supporting Licensing Committees etc. That said, to ensure Members are aware of developments across the Council's range of responsibilities, all Members would continue to receive printed copies of agendas without the minutes and reports attached. Members that do not have access to the Council's intranet and email system would be given the option to continue to receive printed copies of all council agendas and reports.

4.6 The reception desks of the Council's main offices at Penallta House and Pontllanfraith House would continue to receive hard copies of all Council agendas and reports. This would ensure that the public could continue to access information in a hard copy format. Arrangements for publishing agendas and reports on the Council's intranet and website would also remain unchanged.

4.7 If this option were chosen a weekly email would be sent to all Members and senior officers with an electronic link to the latest list of committee agendas and reports published on the intranet. A similar email would be sent to stakeholders with a link to the Council's website.

4.8 At appendix 1 is a full list of council committees, the number of agendas and reports printed in 2008/09, a proposed revised distribution list and potential savings. It is estimated that this option could reduce the printing costs from £22,655 to £8,285.01, a saving of £14,370 per annum for 2008/09 (estimated at £17,244 for 2011/12). However, it should be remembered that the printing budget is demand led and dependant on the number of meetings held per annum as well as the number of reports printed for each meeting.

OPTION 2 – ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION

4.9 This option involves discontinuing the central printing of all council agendas and reports and relying on publishing agendas and reports electronically. Members, officers, representatives of partner organisations/co-opted members and members of the public could only access agendas and reports in an electronic format via the council's internet and intranet sites. This option would result in a saving of £22,655 per annum for 2008/09 (estimated at £27,186 for 2011/12) in the central printing budget but increase the cost of printing papers on multifunctional and personal printers. Given the number of committees attended by Members and senior officers, this may not be a practical option and act as a barrier for meeting participants.

4.10 It is acknowledged that most members (71 out of a total of 73) have remote access to the council's intranet and email system via a laptop and broadband connection. It is possible that laptops could be brought to meetings to access agendas and reports electronically, but again

this may not be a practical solution as some are likely to find it difficult to read long documents on a computer screen and laptops can be cumbersome to carry from meeting to meeting.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Options 1 and 2 above will reduce the work sent to the print room and reduce the amount of papers delivered via the weekly courier run. However, it is thought that the courier run will still be required to safely distribute papers to Members on time and reducing or discontinuing the printing of committee papers will not have a substantial effect on the print room given the recent restructuring.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The financial implications are contained in each of the options listed in this report.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 This report was subject of consultation with all Members with a variety of views expressed.
- 7.2 Five Members supported Option 1.
- 7.3 Three Members suggested iPads are introduced and used to assist electronic publication. The Head of ICT has commented that there are concerns over the security capability of iPads for corporate use. He will investigate the security situation further before considering the appropriateness of iPads as a possible solution.
- 7.4 Four Members strongly objected to changing the current arrangements for the printing and distribution of agendas and reports. One of these Members also suggested that the feasibility of iPads should be explored further.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 That Members endorse to Council that Option 1 be implemented with effect from 1st September 2011 and further work is undertaken to consider the feasibility of introducing iPads.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To realise efficiencies and reduce the amount of printed material produced by the Council.

10. STATUTORY POWERS

- 10.1 Local Government Act 1972

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