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Adran y Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive's Department
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Cyfarfod / Meeting

Y CYNGOR
THE COUNCIL

Dyddiad ac Amser / Date and Time

1.00pm, DYDD IAU, 4 RHAGFYR 2014
1.00pm, THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2014

Lleoliad / Location

Siambwr Dafydd Orwig
Swyddfa'r Cyngor, Caernarfon

Pwynt Cyswllt / Contact Point

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(DOSBARTHWDYD / DISTRIBUTED 26/11/14)

Dilwyn Williams
Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

www.gwynedd.gov.uk

26 Tachwedd / November 2014

Annwyl Gyngorydd,

CYFARFOD O GYNGOR GWYNEDD – 4 RHAGFYR 2014

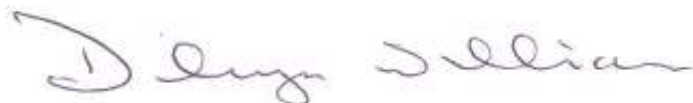
FE'CH GWYSIR TRWY HYN i gyfarfod o **GYNGOR GWYNEDD** a gynhelir am **1.00PM**, **DYDD IAU** nesaf, **4 RHAGFYR 2014 YN SIAMBR DAFYDD ORWIG, SWYDDFA'R CYNGOR, CAERNARFON**, i ystyried y materion a grybwyllir yn y rhaglen a ganlyn.

Dear Councillor,

MEETING OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL – 4 DECEMBER 2014

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a meeting of **GWYNEDD COUNCIL** which will be held at **1.00PM** on **THURSDAY** next, **4 DECEMBER 2014** in **SIAMBR DAFYDD ORWIG, COUNCIL OFFICES, CAERNARFON** to consider the matters mentioned in the following agenda.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir/Yours faithfully,



Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive

Bydd yr ystafelloedd a ganlyn ar gael i'r grwpiau gwleidyddol yn ystod y bore:-
The following rooms will be available for the political groups during the morning:-

Plaid Cymru - Siambr Dafydd Orwig
Annibynnol/Independent – Siambr Hywel Dda
Llais Gwynedd – Ystafell Gwyrfai
Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol/Liberal Democrats - Ystafell Peris
Llafur/Labour – Cefn Siambr Dafydd Orwig/Rear of Siambr Dafydd Orwig

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the last meeting of the Council held on 9 October, 2014 be signed as true record (attached).

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

4. THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any Chairman's announcements.

5. CORRESPONDENCE, COMMUNICATIONS OR OTHER BUSINESS

To receive any correspondence, communications or other business brought forward at the request of the Chairman.

6. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items which are urgent business in the opinion of the Chairman so they may be considered.

7. QUESTIONS

To consider any questions the appropriate notice for which have been given under the Procedural Rules.

8. PRESENTATION BY THE CABINET MEMBER CUSTOMER CARE

To receive a verbal presentation by the Cabinet Member Customer Care.

9. GWYNEDD CHALLENGE

To receive a verbal presentation by the Cabinet Member Resources and the Chief Executive.

10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT: AMENDMENT TO THE 2014/15 INVESTMENT STRATEGY

To consider the report of the Head of Finance (attached).

11. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2015/16

To consider the report of the Head of Finance (attached).

12. COUNCIL TAX: DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO ALLOW DISCOUNTS – 2015/16

To consider the report of the Head of Finance (attached).

13. JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – REVISED TIMETABLE

To consider the report of the Cabinet Member Planning (attached).

14. NOTICES OF MOTION

- (A) In accordance with the Notice of Motion received under the Procedural Rules, Councillor Elin Walker Jones will propose as follows:-

“Gwynedd Council is stating its absolute objection to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The TTIP is a trading agreement between the United States and Europe, which is negotiated behind closed doors and undemocratically. The TTIP is seeking to reduce regulatory barriers for big businesses – things like food safety law and environmental legislation, banking regulations and the powers of individual nations. Services such as the NHS are in danger – the TTIP is a mandate for private companies to take over services. At present, the negotiations still include the NHS. The negotiations are endangering democracy as private companies will be entitled to prosecute governments if those governments’ policies cause profit losses. This is a mandate for large companies to take the reins, as opposed to the democratic, elective system we currently have.

We call on the European Union to suspend all negotiations on the TTIP; to publish the negotiating mandate, and to allow an appropriate investigation of the agreement by the European Parliament, National Parliaments and the National Assembly for Wales.

We call on the Council Leader to write to our members of parliament in Europe to express our objection urgently.”

The procedural motion was received from the member in accordance with the Procedural Rules requesting that the matter be discussed on the day instead of being referred to the relevant committee.

- (B) In accordance with the Notice of Motion received under the Procedural Rules, Councillor Siân Gwenllian will propose as follows:-

“This Council notes the following:

- It has been estimated that the UK Treasury loses as much as £12 billion a year to tax avoidance by multinational companies.
- The use of tax havens by UK companies is out of control, with 98 of the FTSE 100 companies using tax havens as standard procedure.
- Large multinational companies pay as little as 5% in corporate taxes globally, whilst smaller business pay as much as 30%.

This Council believes:

- As a local authority, we have a duty to provide the best possible public services.
- Our ability to provide high-quality local services would be greatly improved through increased revenue by the government as a result of addressing tax avoidance.
- Everyone who profits from public expenditure should contribute their fair share.
- The United Kingdom must lead the way in creating a fairer tax system and addressing tax avoidance.

This Council resolves:

- To support the campaign for tax justice and supports the proposal below:

While many ordinary people face a decrease in their household income and an increase in living costs, some multinational companies are avoiding billions of pounds in tax through a tax system that is unable to make them pay their fair share. Local governments in developing countries and the United Kingdom alike would benefit from a fairer tax system where multinational companies pay their fair share, enabling authorities around the world to provide high-quality public services. We call on the United Kingdom government to act and put an end to the injustice of tax avoidance by large multinational companies.”

The procedural motion was received from the member in accordance with the Procedural Rules requesting that the matter be discussed on the day instead of being referred to the relevant committee.

THE COUNCIL, 09.10.14

Present: Councillor Dewi Owen (Chairman);
Councillor Dilwyn Morgan (Vice-chairman).

Councillors: Craig ab Iago, Stephen Churchman, Endaf Cooke, Edward Dogan, Dyfed Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, Huw Edwards, Trevor Edwards, Thomas Ellis, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Jean Forsyth, Simon Glyn, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Siân Gwellian, Annwen Hughes, Chris Hughes, Jason Humphreys, Peredur Jenkins, Aeron Jones, Brian Jones, Charles W.Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, John Wynn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Beth Lawton, June E.Marshall, Linda Morgan, Michael Sol Owen, William Tudor Owen, Nigel Pickavance, Peter Read, John Pughe Roberts, Liz Saville Roberts, W.Gareth Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Angela Russell, Dyfrig Siencyn, Mike Stevens, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Paul Thomas, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams, Hefin Williams, John Wyn Williams, Owain Williams, R.H.Wyn Williams, Mandy Williams-Davies and Robert J.Wright.

Also present: Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Trefor Jones (Corporate Director), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Geraint George (Head of Strategic and Improvement Department), Rhun ap Gareth (Senior Solicitor / Deputy Monitoring Officer), Sion Huws (Senior Solicitor), Arwel E. Jones (Senior Manager - Corporate Commissioning Service), Dafydd Wyn Williams (Senior Manager - Transport), Geraint Owen (Senior Manager - Human Resources), Janet Roberts (Senior Manager - Delivery and Supporting Change Service), Anthony Williams (Performance and Efficiency Improvement Officer) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Anwen Davies, Lesley Day, Gwynfor Edwards, Gweno Glyn, Gwen Griffith, John Brynmor Hughes, Louise Hughes, Anne Lloyd Jones, Dyfrig Jones, Linda A.W.Jones, Llywarch Bowen Jones, Sion Wyn Jones, Dilwyn Lloyd, Dafydd Meurig, W.Roy Owen, Caerwyn Roberts and Eurig Wyn.

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Councillor Aeron Jones.

1. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on 17 July 2014 as a true record.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Simon Glyn declared a personal interest deriving from employment in item 9 on the agenda – Local Government Reorganisation.

The member was of the opinion that it was an interest but that it was not prejudicial and he participated fully in the discussion on the item.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Condolences

Condolences were expressed to the following:-

Councillor Annwen Hughes on the loss of her mother.

Councillor Peter Read on the loss of his father.

Councillor Roy Owen on the loss of his mother-in-law.

It was also noted that the Council wished to remember others within the county's communities who had lost loved ones recently.

The Council members stood as a mark of respect.

(b) Best Wishes

Well wishes were expressed to the new Chief Executive, Dilwyn Williams, who was present at his first meeting of the Council as Chief Executive.

It was also noted that this would have been the first meeting of the Council for Iwan Evans, the new Monitoring Officer, but due to bereavement the Deputy Monitoring Officer was present on his behalf.

(c) Congratulations

Everyone from Gwynedd who had been successful at the Carmarthenshire National Eisteddfod this year were congratulated, especially Guto Dafydd, Stratetig and Improvement on winning the Crown and Lleucu Roberts on winning the Prose Medal and the Daniel Owen Memorial Prize.

Haf Thomas, Human Resources was also congratulated on being accepted to the Gorsedd.

(ch) A Good Cause

It was noted that a bike ride by 'Gafael Llaw', a charity from the area that was established to support children and young people with cancer, had succeeded to raise £60,000, with the money going towards supporting the aim of the charity, which was to upgrade facilities and resources for children on Dewi Ward, Ysbyty Gwynedd.

It was noted that around 20 people from Gwynedd had gone on the 650 mile bike ride over 7 days, going around 15 children wards in Wales' hospitals, and that two of the cyclists were members of Council staff; Iwan Trefor Jones, Corporate Director (and the Chairman of Gafael Llaw) and Steffan Jones, Senior Manager of the Highways Department.

Both were extremely grateful for the support by staff and members of the Council to the bike ride and for all the financial contributions.

(d) Note

It was noted that the Council had once again been successful in renewing the Gold Award for Corporate Health Standard, and this during a re-assessment meeting, and that it was now one of only six local authorities in Wales that held this high level. The standard, that was led by the Assembly Government, assessed the health promotion

activities and initiatives that were implemented by employers to care for their staff's health and wellbeing.

During the recent Awards Ceremony of the Wales Co-operative Centre, it was noted that the Chief Executive of the Centre had referred specifically to the Council's work regarding supporting the social enterprises sector in Gwynedd. He referred to Gwynedd's status as a "Social Enterprise Area", the support that was given to social enterprises in the area and the work that had been done regarding identifying opportunities for enterprises to provide and supply goods and services on behalf of the Council. A trophy was presented to the Council to acknowledge the valuable work it had done in this field.

4. QUESTIONS

Question from Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams

"May we as councillors have a clear image of the situation regarding the Briwet Bridge Plan and the delay, the vehicle bridge and the completion dates for the plan?"

Response of Councillor Gareth Roberts, Cabinet Member - Environment

(The Cabinet Member's written answer had been distributed to the members in the group meetings on the morning of the Council meeting.)

"I sympathise with the people around the site. Obviously it is an inconvenience, but the good news is that it is an investment of £20m for the area and the place will be greatly improved after implementing this plan and the new bridge will be much better than the old one. Therefore it is going to make a big difference to that area."

A supplementary question from Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams

"Will there be a financial cost on Gwynedd Council for the delay?"

Response of Councillor Gareth Roberts, Cabinet Member - Environment

"It is hard to give a definite answer because the contract has been awarded to Hochtief and the risks have been transferred to the company that are working on the bridge, unless there is some fault on us as the Council. If they are at fault, then they are carrying the risk. As far as I know at the moment, we are not at fault as of yet in any way or form therefore if they were to go over the date, it would be their loss and there would not be any sort of financial risk to this Council. There was one issue with the pylon, but Hochtief have settled that issue with the National Grid, so again, it was not our fault, but it was something that Hochtief had not been aware of from the beginning. Everything else are things that they have had to think about, such as transferring the water pipe and so on. If there is a delay with the company that transfers that, it's something that the Hochtief company should have thought about beforehand. Therefore, there is no risk to us at this time, but if we were at fault for any reason then that would be another matter."

5. A PRESENTATION BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ECONOMY

A presentation was received from Councillor John Wynn Jones, Cabinet Member – Economy, detailing the fields that he dealt with, the service's priorities, the activities that were currently on the horizon as well as plans for the future.

The Cabinet Member responded to a series of questions by members regarding:-

- The Snowdonia Enterprise Zone and the future of the Trawsfynydd site;
- Promoting tourism in South Gwynedd;
- Improving collaboration between the planning and economy services;
- The importance of supporting petrol stations and retail businesses in rural areas;
- Income from festivals and events.

It was noted that the old Seiont II Maritime Museum continued to be on the maps on the visitor notice boards around Caernarfon town and the Cabinet Member agreed to pass on the comment to the department.

The Cabinet Member was thanked for his presentation and Councillor Sian Gwenllian was congratulated on her appointment as Champion of Small Businesses.

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Leader submitted a report seeking the Council's opinion on the draft viewpoint that was proposed in paragraphs 9.1 and 9.4 of the report in response to the Government's White Paper on Local Government Reorganisation.

During the discussion:-

- It was noted that paragraph 9.4(ch) was core to the Council's viewpoint. It was emphasised that it was necessary to be uncompromising while discussing with other councils to ensure that this Council's Language Policy was not weakened in any way and it was suggested to list the current aims of the Council's Language Plan under paragraph 9.4(ch) to reinforce the stance of this Council.
- It was agreed that the interests of Gwynedd's residents should be protected, but it was therefore suggested that there was a danger in cutting the number of councillors in communities.
- It was emphasised that the reorganisation would definitely happen, whether it be 2018 or 2020, and due to the fact that there were financial incentives to councils who merged voluntarily, the door should not be closed on any possibility that could lead to savings in managerial, central or back office costs that would, in turn reduce the size of the cuts that any council would have to make over the coming years.
- It was suggested that the door should be left slightly open, but only after waiting to see what incentives they intended to propose to councils that joined voluntarily.
- Some concern was noted about losing the 'local' element of local government.

A vote was taken on the motion, with the addition of including a reference to the current objectives of the Council's Language Plan, and the motion was carried.

RESOLVED to approve the draft viewpoint that was proposed in paragraphs 9.1 to 9.4 of the report responding to the Government's White Paper on Local Government Reorganisation, and expand paragraph 9.4(ch) to note the following:-

"Implementing a Language Policy that is firmly in favour of the Welsh language is key for any new council that Gwynedd would be a part of for the future, including the current objectives of the Council's Language Plan, which are:-

- *Enable everyone that receives or uses the Council's services, or contributes to the democratic process, to do so through the medium of Welsh or English according to their own personal preference.*
- *Promote the use of the Welsh language in the Council's area and be an anchor for the language in its revival across Wales.*
- *Promote the use of the Welsh language by other public bodies that are involved with the Council, and support and promote the use of Welsh by bodies and businesses that provide public services in the Council's areas.*
- *Establish the Welsh language as the official language for the Council's internal administration by providing training facilities in jobs to enable staff to develop their language skills in Welsh and English.*
- *Develop pupils and students' ability to be confident bilingually to enable them to become rounded members of the bilingual society that they are part of."*

7. COUNCIL PAY POLICY

The Cabinet Member - Resources submitted a report, which recommended an adjustment to the Pay Policy, in order to facilitate the ability to appoint.

The Cabinet Member noted that in light of receiving legal opinion very recently, he recommended that the Council adjusted its Pay Policy by expanding Chief Officers' pay level to include provision for an additional market supplement of up to £5,000. He added that the additional level would be payable on appointment only, if a business risk assessment showed clear justification of the need, which would be completed and implemented by the appointing body.

Some members were of the opinion that a market supplement should not be offered to Chief Officers in the current financial climate, but several other members noted that it was necessary to pay the price of the market in order to attract the best possible applicants.

As a compromise, an amendment was proposed and seconded to include provision for a market supplement of up to £3,000.

A notice of a further amendment was given.

In his closing statements, the Cabinet Member noted that he accepted the amendment and he withdrew his original motion with the consent of the meeting and the seconder. Therefore, the motion as amended replaced the original motion and become an original motion.

A registered vote was called for on the original proposal.

An amendment was proposed and seconded to include provision for a market supplement of up to £2,000.

A vote was taken on the amendment and it fell.

In accordance with Procedural Rules, the following vote was recorded on the original motion:-

In favour of the motion: (38) Councillors Craig ab Iago, Edward Dogan, Dyfed Edwards, Elwyn Edwards, Huw Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Jean Forsyth, Selwyn Griffiths, Siân Gwenllian, Annwen Hughes, Peredur Jenkins, Charles W.Jones, Eric

Merfyn Jones, John Wynn Jones, Beth Lawton, June E.Marshall, Dilwyn Morgan, Linda Morgan, Dewi Owen, Michael Sol Owen, William Tudor Owen, Nigel Pickavance, Peter Read, John Pughe Roberts, W.Gareth Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Angela Russell, Dyfrig Siencyn, Mike Stevens, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Paul Thomas, Eirwyn Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Hefin Williams, John Wyn Williams, R.H.Wyn Williams, Mandy Williams-Davies.

Abstaining: (2) Councillors Elin Walker Jones and Eryl Jones-Williams.

Against: (14) Councillors Stephen W.Churchman, Endaf Cooke, Thomas Ellis, Simon Glyn, Alwyn Gruffydd, Chris Hughes, Jason Humphreys, Aeron Jones, Ann Williams, Elfed Williams, Gruffydd Williams, Owain Williams and Robert J.Wright.

RESOLVED to amend the Pay Policy by extending Chief Officers pay level to include provision for an additional market supplement of up to £3,000 payable where that has been justified by a business risk assessment.

8. AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

The Leader submitted a report recommending amendments to the Constitution:-

- (a) to respond to the changes in responsibilities following re-structuring the old Democracy and Legal Department
- (b) to ensure that it conforms to the statutory requirements of the Local Government (Standing Orders) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014
- (c) to deal with remote attendance at meetings through video equipment
- (ch) to deal with the situation of chairing the Central Licensing and General Licensing Committees.

On a point of accuracy, it was noted that the new wording in the English version of Appendix 3 should be underlined, rather than crossed out.

RESOLVED to amend the Constitution in accordance with the content of Appendices 1-4 of the report, subject to correcting the English version of Appendix 3 to read:-

“PROCEDURAL ORDER 9.12.3

- (5) No member shall serve as a chairman on more than one committee. This provision shall not prevent a member who is a chairman of a committee from taking the chair of a committee under paragraph (2) nor from serving as the chairman of the Central Licensing Committee and the General Licensing Committee at the same time.”***

9. APPOINTMENT OF ELECTED MEMBER TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Leader submitted a report which recommended that the Council appointed Councillor Lesley Day to the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Lesley Day to serve on the Standards Committee as an Elected Member for a period of four years or until the next general local government election following her appointment, whichever is first.

10. GWYNEDD COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2013/14

The Leader submitted a report which recommended that the Council approved the document as a balanced, fair and accurate reflection of the Council's performance during 2013/14, and to adopt the report.

RESOLVED to approve the report as a balanced, fair and accurate reflection of the Council's performance in 2013/14, and to adopt the report.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

- (A) It was reported that a notice of motion had been received, along with a procedural motion, in accordance with the Procedural Rules, from Councillor Owain Williams, requesting that the following proposal be discussed at the full Council instead of being referred to a committee.

RESOLVED to discuss the motion at this meeting.

The following proposal was proposed and seconded:-

"Following the latest attacks by the Israeli State on the territory of the Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, this Council calls for a trade embargo with Israel and condemns the over-reaction and savageness used.

Furthermore, we confirm and underline this Council's decision to stop investing in Israel or in that country's establishments.

We believe that if Gwynedd leads the way there is hope that other councils in Wales and beyond will follow our example."

During the discussion:-

- The proposal was supported and the member was congratulated for bringing the matter before the Council.
- It was noted that it was important that Gwynedd Council looked out on the world and that it tried to influence to the best of its ability on a situation like this.
- It was emphasised that it must be made clear that the proposal condemned the Israeli State and not the Jewish religion.

RESOLVED to accept the motion.

- (B) It was reported that a notice of motion had been received, along with a procedural motion, in accordance with the Procedural Rules, from Councillor Mair Rowlands, requesting that the following proposal be discussed at the full Council instead of being referred to a committee.

RESOLVED to discuss the motion at this meeting.

The following proposal was proposed and seconded:-

"That this Council will use the domain *.Cymru* using the web address *gwynedd.cymru* rather than *gwynedd.gov.uk* and that we will encourage other councils throughout Wales to follow our example."

During the discussion, support for the proposal was expressed and the member was congratulated for bringing the matter before the Council.

On a point of explanation, the Cabinet Member - Customer Care referred to national work that had already been completed on this. He noted the following:-

- At least 18 months ago, public establishments were asked to express interest in using the new extension .cymru/.wales and what addresses they would like to register.
- Gwynedd Council had asked for gwynedd.cymru, gwynedd.wales, cyngorgwynedd.cymru and gwyneddcouncil.wales.
- That gwynedd.cymru or gwynedd.wales would not be reserved for Gwynedd Council, as it referred to an area rather than an establishment, but confirmation was given that cyngorgwynedd.cymru and gwyneddcouncil.wales were reserved for the Council.
- That this followed the national standard “cyngor[enw’rcyngor].cymru” and “[councilname]council.wales”.
- That the current extension, .gov.uk, was allocated for local and central government establishments only.
- That the Welsh Government were in discussions with Nominet (the body that was responsible for registering the domain names) to establish llyw.cymru and gov.wales.

In light of this explanation, the proposer amended her proposal as follows with the consent of the meeting and the seconder.

“That this Council will use the domain *.Cymru* using the web address *cyngorgwynedd.cymru* and *gwyneddcouncil.wales* rather than *gwynedd.gov.uk* and that we will encourage other councils throughout Wales to follow our example.”

A vote was taken on the amended motion, and it was carried.

RESOLVED to accept the amended motion.

- (C) Submitted – for information, a letter received from Scotland’s Prime Minister in response to Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd’s notice of motion to the previous meeting regarding the referendum on Scottish independence.

RESOLVED to note the letter.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 3.15pm.

MEETING	FULL COUNCIL
DATE	4 DECEMBER 2014
TITLE	TREASURY MANAGEMENT: AMENDMENT TO THE 2014/15 INVESTMENT STRATEGY
PURPOSE	ADOPT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
AUTHOR	DAFYDD L EDWARDS – HEAD OF FINANCE
CABINET MEMBER	COUNCILLOR PEREDUR JENKINS

Introduction and Background

1. CIPFA’s Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services requires the Council to prepare a policy statement and practice papers, together with detailed schedules setting out the Council’s approach to all treasury operations. The primary requirement of the code is the approval by the full Council of the Policy Statement, the practice papers and the schedules. These were approved by the Council (in respect of 2014/15) at its meeting of 6 March 2014.

Regulation of UK Banks

2. The Strategy approved in March includes a schedule of approved investment counterparties (primarily banks where the Council may deposit cash). Regulatory changes for banks mean this schedule now requires reviewing and updating.
3. The United Kingdom is implementing the final bail-in provisions of the EU Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive in January 2015, a year ahead of most other countries. Credit rating agencies have stated that they plan to review European banks ratings in line with each country’s implementation of this directive.
4. Many UK banks have standalone ratings in the “BBB” category, but potential government support lifts them into the “A” category. Once the directive is implemented, the government support will no longer exist. Therefore, there is a real risk that some major UK banks’ credit ratings will fall to a level below category “A-” before the end of the 2014/15 financial year.

The Way Forward - Options

5. There are two options in response to this risk:
 - (a) amend the Treasury Management Strategy Statement to allow investment (cash deposits) in banks with lower credit ratings, or
 - (b) prepare to invest without using any of the major UK banks.

Option (b) would require a drastic review of investment counterparties, and the Council’s Treasury Management advisers recommend option (a) above.

6. In order to continue using UK banks, an additional category of banks and other organisations whose credit rating is “BBB+” has to be added to the approved investment counterparties.
7. Further, as we don’t recommend lowering the definition of “high credit quality” below “A-”, we need to amend the “non-specified investment” limits to allow for investments with “BBB+” counterparties.

Recommended Amendments to Schedules

8. The revised paragraphs of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2014/15 are shown in Appendix A with the amendments highlighted in yellow:
 - (a) Table 2: Approved Investment Counterparties, where the “BBB+” category has been inserted with a limit of £4 million per counterparty.
 - (b) Table 3: Non-Specified Investment Limits, where the total investments without credit ratings, or rated below “A-”, has been increased from £7m to £20million, to allow for continued use of UK banks as counterparties. The total of non-specified investments has also been increased from £50m to £60m.

The Pension Fund’s Cash Flow

9. As administering authority of the Gwynedd Pension Fund, the Council undertakes treasury management investment functions on its behalf by combining the surplus cash held by the Council and the Pension Fund for daily investment purposes. The Pension Fund approved the relevant elements of the Council’s Strategy Statement and requested the continuation of the pooling arrangements for 2014/15 at its meeting on 17 March 2014. These amendments will be presented to the Pensions Committee on 6 January 2015 for approval.

Scrutiny of the Amendments

10. Due to the committee timetable, it has not been possible for the Audit Committee to consider these amendments before presentation of this report to full Council. These measures are required to cover the three months to 31 March 2015. Full consideration of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2015/16 will take place during January and February 2015 prior to consideration by the Council on 5 March 2015. This will include the opportunity to question officers and specialist advisers regarding appropriate counterparty requirements and limits.

Recommendation

11. **The Council is asked to adopt the amendments to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Investment Strategy for 2014/15 (Appendix A) for the three months from 1 January 2015 to 31 March 2015.**

Appendix A

The amendments to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2014/15 are highlighted yellow in the tables below.

5.3 The Council may invest its surplus funds with counterparties in any of the categories in table 2 below, subject to the cash and time limits shown.

Table 2: Approved Investment Counterparties

Counterparty	Cash limit	Time limit
Banks and other organisations and securities whose lowest published long-term credit rating from Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's is:	AAA	5 years*
	AA+	5 years*
	AA	4 years*
	AA-	3 years*
	A+	2 years
	A	1 year
	A-	1 year
	BBB+	£4m each
The Authority's current account bank (Barclays Bank plc) if it fails to meet the above criteria	£1m	next day
UK Central Government (irrespective of credit rating)	unlimited	10 years**
UK Local Authorities (irrespective of credit rating)	£11m each	2 years
UK Registered Providers of Social Housing whose lowest published long-term credit rating is A- or higher	£5m each	2 years
UK Building Societies without credit ratings	£1m each	1 year
Money market funds and other pooled funds	£6m each	n/a
Any other organisation, subject to an external credit assessment and specific advice from the Authority's treasury management adviser	£5m each	3 months
	£1m each	1 year
	£100k each	5 years
Business loans to local companies***	£3m each	10 years

* but no longer than 2 years in fixed-term deposits and other illiquid instruments

** but no longer than 5 years in fixed-term deposits and other illiquid instruments

*** Advancement of these loans will be approved by the procedure detailed in paragraph 5.9 below. Evaluation of the business loans is not part of the advice or services from the Council's treasury advisor.

5.12 **Non-specified Investments:** Any investment not meeting the definition of a “specified investment” is classed as “non-specified”. The Council does not intend to make any investments denominated in foreign currencies. Non-specified investments will therefore be limited to long-term investments, i.e. those that are due to mature 12 months or longer from the date of arrangement; those that are defined as capital expenditure by legislation, such as shares in money market funds and other pooled funds; and investments with bodies and schemes not meeting the definition on “high credit quality”. Limits on non-specified investments are shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Non-Specified Investment Limits

	Cash limit
Total long-term investments	£30m
Total shares in money market funds	£35m
Total investments without credit ratings or rated below [A-]	£20m
Total investments in foreign countries rated below [AA+]	£7m
Total non-specified investments	£60m

MEETING:	Full Council
DATE:	4 December 2014
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn
TITLE:	COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2015/16
OBJECTIVE:	Confirm the continuation of the current Local Scheme for providing assistance towards paying Council Tax for the year beginning 1 April 2015.
AUTHOR:	Dafydd L Edwards, Head of Finance

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present arrangements for the implementation of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and to approve it for 2015/16.
- 1.2 On 1 April 2013, as part of the UK Government's welfare reform programme, Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- 1.3 In accordance with the 'Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013', every local authority must make a scheme in order to determine which reductions will be available as support towards paying the Council Tax. Gwynedd Council's current local scheme was adopted by the Full Council on 5 December 2013.
- 1.4 Under the local scheme, qualifying taxpayers may continue to receive a reduction up to 100% of their Council Tax bill (where in receipt of certain benefits).
- 1.5 **The recommendations below are that the Gwynedd Council Local Scheme continues without revisions for 2015/16.** Detailed explanations and reasons behind the subsequent recommendations follow in the body of this report.

2. Recommendations

The full Council is asked to resolve formally:

- 2.1 To continue the Council's Local Scheme for the year commencing 1 April 2015 as it was during 2014/15. Therefore, the following conditions regarding the discretionary elements will continue:**
- a) To apply a 100% disregard for war disablement pensions, war widows' pensions and war widowers' pensions, for both pensioners and working age claimants.**
 - b) Not to increase the extended reduction periods for pensioners and working age claimants from the standard four weeks in the Prescribed Scheme.**
 - c) Not to increase the backdate period for pensioners and working age claimants from the standard three months contained within the Prescribed Scheme.**
- 2.2 Where appropriate, to delegate powers to the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Poverty Prevention, to make minor amendments to the scheme for 2015/16, on condition that it will not change the substance of the scheme.**

3. Background Information

- 3.1** It was reported to the full Council on 24 January 2013 that the Welfare Reform Act 2013 included provisions to abolish Council Tax Benefit on 31 March 2013. From 1 April 2013, the responsibility for arranging support towards paying Council Tax and the associated funding transferred from the DWP to local authorities in England, and to the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government.
- 3.2** The relevant Regulations for the first year of the scheme (i.e. the year beginning 1 April 2013) contained a "sunset clause" which meant that they were only relevant for the 2013/14 financial year.
- 3.3** However, the Welsh Government's new Regulations (the 2013 Regulations) were approved by the National Assembly on 27 November 2013. These Regulations are relevant for every financial year from 2014/15 onwards.
- 3.4** These regulations allow support up to 100% for claimants and the financing of some of the relevant cost.
- 3.5** The Gwynedd Council Local Scheme for 2014/15, based on the 2013 Regulations, was approved by the Full Council on 5 December 2013. The Regulations control the implementation of reduction schemes across the whole of Wales and are designed to ensure that each local authority consistently provides support for Welsh taxpayers.

4. 2015/16 Reduction Scheme

- 4.1 The 'Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013' and the 'Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2013', as submitted to the Welsh Government, were adopted by the Assembly on 27 November 2013. These Regulations apply for Council Tax Reduction Schemes for financial years starting on or after 1 April 2014. That is, 2014/15 and every subsequent financial year, until the Regulations are abolished
- 4.2 The Regulations (Regulation 18) state that for each financial year, an authority must consider whether to revise its scheme or to replace it with another scheme; the authority must make any revision to its scheme, or any replacement scheme, no later than 31 January in the financial year preceding that for which the revision or replacement scheme is to have effect.
- 4.3 The Regulations (Regulation 12) state that the function of making the scheme cannot be delegated to the Cabinet, and it must be decided by the full Council.
- 4.4 Therefore, the purpose of this report is to satisfy the requirement for the Council to consider whether to revise its local scheme.
- 4.5 There is limited discretion under the Prescribed Scheme for councils to consider the following 3 specific discretionary elements. These discretionary elements are more generous than the national scheme.

War disablement pensions, war widows' pensions and war widowers' pensions (*recommendation 2.1(a) above*)

- 4.6 There is discretion to increase the disregard for war disablement pensions, war widows' pensions and war widowers' pensions, for both pensioners and working age.

Presently, regulations provide that the first £10 of a weekly war disablement pension, war widows' pension and war widowers' pension are disregarded. However, local authorities have discretion to disregard up to 100% of the actual amount above the first £10. Since 1 April 1996 Gwynedd Council, as have the majority of other Welsh Authorities, resolved to disregard 100% of the war pensions above the £10. It is estimated in 2014/15 that this disregard of war pensions will cost the Authority £30,000 in Council Tax reductions. As this is the position in 2014/15, this sum has already been included within the base budget and in the 2015/16 Financial Strategy.

It is recommended that this local discretion in Gwynedd continues.

Extended payment period for working age persons (*recommendation 2.1(b) above*)

- 4.7 There is discretion to increase the standard extended payment period of 4 weeks given to people after they return to work, when they have been in receipt of a relevant qualifying benefit for at least 26 weeks.

There is no limit on the maximum period they may be extended to, but to extend this period would have financial implications. The estimated expenditure in respect of the standard 4 week extended payments is £20,000.

It is recommended that the standard four week extended payment period contained within the Prescribed Scheme remains unaltered.

Backdating late applications
(*recommendation 2.1(c) above*)

- 4.8 There is discretion to increase backdates for late applications beyond the standard three months. There is no limit on the maximum period they may be extended to. The current cost of granting backdated claims (3 months) is estimated at £28,000.

The current Council Tax Reduction Scheme only allows backdating for a maximum period of 3 months. Extending this period would increase the cost of the Scheme.

It is recommended that there should be no increase in the backdate period from the standard 3 months contained within the Prescribed Scheme.

- 4.9 The recommendations above for 2015/16 are in line with current arrangements in 2014/15.**

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Should the Council wish to revise its local scheme – in effect to amend the 3 areas of discretion described in paragraphs 4.6 to 4.8 – it would need to consult with “any persons who would have an interest”.
- 5.2 There was a particularly thorough and inclusive consultation exercise in December 2012 / January 2013 for the 2013/14 scheme, and a further consultation for the period 29/11/13 to 10/01/14 for the 2014/15 scheme.
- 5.3 As there is no intention to change the Local Scheme this year, further consultation is not necessary.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 Other than funding at Council level, the scheme proposed for 2015/16 does not contain any significant changes from the scheme which is currently operational. Therefore, Gwynedd Council did not conduct a local Equalities Impact Assessment Study this year. This was done for 2013/14, when the arrangements changed from Council Tax Benefit to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- 6.2 The Welsh Government has undertaken a detailed ‘regulatory’ impact assessment, which includes equality impact assessment, and I understand that the findings were in line with their expectations.

7. Resources

- 7.1 When adopting the Local Scheme in December 2013, it was reported to the Council that there was some vagueness whether all the costs of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme were contained in the 2015/16 'settlement' grant to local government from the Welsh Government, or whether only 90% was to be financed by the Government, with the local authorities paying the remaining 10%. In the previous year, 90% had been contained in the settlement, with the other 10% funded by a specific grant.
- 7.2 The 2014/15 'settlement' included the commitment for local government to meet the full cost of the Council Tax Reduction scheme, and it was reported that the true reduction in Welsh revenue support grant between the two years (nationally) was closer to 4% than the figure of 3.5% that the Government publicly acknowledged, since local authorities had to finance 10% of the reductions.
- 7.3 This year, the situation is somewhat worse, since the sum in the settlement has reduced – the notional cost of Council Tax Reductions in Gwynedd in 2015/16 (according to notional allocation of the total SSA between Services in the conditional settlement's tables) is £8.899m, compared with £8.961m for 2014/15.
- 7.4 As well as funding the "10%" that is not contained in the settlement, the Council must meet the cost of growth in caseload, as well as inflation, which is not financed by the Welsh Government. In terms of inflation, the cost of support will increase in proportion with the increase in Council Tax.
- 7.5 There is no choice other than to face with situation and the above will be considered appropriately and factored into the Financial Strategy that identifies the budgetary gap for 2015/16.

MEETING:	Full Council
DATE:	4 December 2014
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Peredur Jenkins
TITLE:	COUNCIL TAX: DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO ALLOW DISCOUNTS
OBJECTIVE:	Formal ratification for 2015/16 and thereafter of previous decisions not to allow any discounts for second homes and to disallow discount on empty properties.
AUTHOR:	Dafydd L Edwards, Head of Finance

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has resolved annually since 1998 to allow NO discounts to second homes.
- 1.2 The Council has resolved annually since 2009 NOT to allow a discount in respect of empty properties.
- 1.3 It is prudent to seek an annual decision by the full Council on these matters.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Therefore, the Council is asked to formally resolve again for 2015/16 that Gwynedd Council allows NO discount under Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to the two classes of second homes (classes A and B) defined in the Council Tax (Prescribed Class of Dwellings) (Wales) Regulations 1998.**
- 2.2 **Further, the Council is asked to formally decide again for 2015/16 to allow NO discount in respect of empty properties (class C).**

3. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by Section 75 of The Local Government Act 2003, and, The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (Wales) Regulations 1998, as amended by The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2004 provides Councils with the discretionary powers to grant discount, or not, to two classes of second homes (classes A and B, below) and to long term empty dwellings (class C). The discount can be 50%, a reduced percentage or no discount.
- 3.2 Whilst regulations provide the Cabinet with powers to decide on the council tax base, **a decision by the full Council is still required in relation to discounts.** For technical reasons (see 4.3 below), annual confirmation has been sought again regarding the decision to disallow council tax discounts.

4. CURRENT POLICY AND INTENTION

- 4.1 The Council has resolved to allow NO discounts to second homes (classes A and B) every year since receiving discretionary powers for these classes in 1998, and it is recommended below that this should continue for 2015/16.
- 4.2 The Council has also resolved NOT to allow a 50% discount for class C (in respect of empty/unoccupied properties) since 2009/10, and it is recommended below that this should continue for 2015/16.
- 4.3 In order to avoid the need for an annual decision on the above, the full Council resolved on 21 January 2010 to confirm that this policy would continue beyond 2010/11, and thereafter until a relevant item is tabled on the full Council's agenda. However, consideration by a valuation tribunal of a case involving a property in another county raised doubt regarding the validity of a permanent resolution and policy on this matter, and the legal opinion is that it would avoid an element of risk to the Council if we secure an annual decision for this matter.
- 4.4 The financial strategy for 2015/16, and the Council's grant settlement from the Welsh Government, is based on continuation of the policy to allow NO discounts, and any change to that policy would need to be funded by the Council in 2015/16.

5. "THE REGULATIONS" – COUNCIL TAX (PRESCRIBED CLASS OF DWELLINGS (WALES) REGULATIONS 1998 / THE COUNCIL TAX (PRESCRIBED CLASSES OF DWELLINGS) (WALES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2004

- 5.1 In the above Regulations, 'second homes' have been categorised into two classes, A and B, while class C refers to empty properties:
- ❑ **Class A** - Second homes which are unoccupied and furnished, with a restriction on occupancy for a period of at least 28 consecutive days in any 12 month period.
 - ❑ **Class B** - Second homes which are unoccupied and furnished.
 - ❑ **Class C** – empty and unfurnished properties, and have been such for a period of over 6 months.
- 5.2 The Regulations provide the Council with the discretion to charge full Council Tax or to allow a 25% or 50% discount to classes A and B.
- 5.3 Similarly, the Regulations provide the Council with discretion to continue to allow a 50% discount, to allow a lower percentage of discount, or no discount at all to class C.

6. SECOND HOMES

- 6.1 Further to changes in national regulations, in future, it will be possible to charge more than 100% of the usual Council Tax payable on second homes, by means of a 'premium' rather than a discount.
- 6.2 Acting jointly with other local authorities, the Council Leader, Cabinet Members and many officers campaigned to prompt this development, with local authorities retaining the additional council tax income generated.

- 6.3 Submissions to the Welsh Government on behalf of Gwynedd Council have supported the introduction of a premium, whilst also stressing the need for measures to control / prevent the transfer of second homes to commercial holiday lets and the business rates regime.
- 6.4 We now understand that the recently enacted Housing (Wales) Act 2014 contains the discretionary provision for councils to charge a “premium” of not more than 100% in this context but such provision needs a commencement order before implementation.
- 6.5 We understand that the commencement order is scheduled for 2015/16. It is envisaged that amendment of all associated regulations will also be completed during 2015/16 in order to satisfy determination and due notice to affected council taxpayers a full year before the chargeable date of April 2017.
- 6.6 In the interim, for 2015/16 and 2016/17, it is recommended (2.1 above) that the Council allows no discounts for second homes.

7. EMPTY PROPERTY

- 7.1 Gwynedd Council’s Empty Property Strategy was adopted in February 2009. The Council has also recognised the importance of dealing with empty properties within its Strategic Plan (bringing empty properties back into use). The Empty Property Strategy’s mission statement is that: *“Gwynedd Council will endeavour to bring empty properties back into use. Our aims are to contribute to the well-being of the neighbourhood, increase the supply of housing, reduce homelessness or the potential for homelessness, and at the same time, reduce the pressure on the Housing Waiting List”*.
- 7.2 Since April 2009, long term empty dwellings have been charged 100% council tax, following either an exempt period of 6 months, or an extended 12 month period of exemption if undergoing major renovation. Any discount would provide an unfortunate incentive for owners to keep dwellings empty. The Empty Property Strategy includes the Council exercising its discretion to charge 100% council tax on long term empty dwellings, as an incentive for these dwellings to be reoccupied. It is recommended that the full Council continues with the resolution not to allow a discount on empty property in 2015/16.
- 7.3 In October 2012, there was a Welsh Government consultation regarding empty property taxation and powers to raise more than 100% of Council Tax on long-term empty properties. On the 18 November 2013 the Housing (Wales) Bill 2013 was issued.
- 7.4 Similar to second homes, as referred to above, the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 includes the discretionary provision for local authorities to charge a council tax premium of not more than 100% on properties which have been empty for 12 months or more.
- 7.5 Again the provision needs a commencement order before implementation. As with second homes, the earliest chargeable date for any premium is April 2017. In the interim, for 2015/16 and 2016/17, it is recommended (2.2 above) that the Council resolves to allow no discounts for empty properties.

MEETING	Full Council
DATE	4 December 2014
TOPIC	Joint Local Development Plan – Revised timetable
PURPOSE	To inform the Council about the revised timetable for preparing the Joint Local Development Plan, in order to obtain its approval before submitting it to the Welsh Government.
RECOMMENDATION	That the Council approves the revised timetable to prepare the Joint Local Development Plan in order to reflect the change in circumstances and to conform to statutory requirements.
AUTHOR	Aled Davies, Head of Regulatory Department
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr. John Wyn Williams

1. Gwynedd Council and the Isle of Anglesey County Council are working together to prepare a Joint Local Development Plan for Anglesey and the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority area.
2. Members will recall that a Delivery Agreement sets out how and when the Councils will prepare the Joint Local Development Plan. The current Delivery Agreement was approved by both Councils by the end of December 2013 and then supported by the Welsh Government in January 2014.
3. Due to a number of reasons, beyond the control of the Joint Planning Policy Unit, more time was required to prepare the Deposit Plan. The reasons for the delay and a revised timetable were set out in a report to the Joint Planning Policy Committee in September 2014. The following provides a link to the report http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/gwy_pwyllgorau.asp?cat=8496&doc=31593&Language=1.
4. The Joint Planning Policy Committee recommended that steps be taken to gain each Council's approval of the revised timetable now set out in **Appendix 1**.

5. A similar report is being considered by the Isle of Anglesey County Council on the 4th December 2014
6. When the Councils approve the revised timetable the Delivery Agreement will be amended accordingly and sent on to the Welsh Government's support. The revised Delivery Agreement and the Welsh Government's letter will be made available to view in the Councils' offices and on each Council's website.

Recommendation

7. That the Council approves the revised timetable to prepare the Joint Local Development Plan in order to reflect the change in circumstances and to conform to statutory requirements.

APPENDIX 1 Revised timetable to prepare the Joint Local Development Plan

Stage in the preparation process		Current Timetable	Revised timetable
1.	Preparation and publication of the final Delivery Agreement (<i>Regulation 5 - 10</i>)	January to November 2011	January to November 2011
2.	Review and develop the evidence base	July 2010 - October 2012	January 2011 - October 2012
3.	Participation Pre-deposit – prepare the pre-deposit documents that will outline the key objectives and preferred strategy (<i>Regulation 14</i>). This will not be a full draft of the Joint LDP	January 2011 - October 2012	January 2011 - October 2012
4.	Pre-Deposit Consultation - 6 week period (<i>Regulation 15</i>). Formal consultation on the pre-deposit documents and the sustainability appraisal report	May - June 2013	May - June 2013
5.	Participation - further develop the evidence base and prepare the Deposit Joint LDP (full draft plan) which is based on the evidence base, including the response to the pre-deposit documents	July 2013 - March 2014	July 2013 – December 2014
6.	Placing the Joint LDP and associated documents on deposit - 6 week consultation	May - June 2014	February 2015 – March 2015

	period (<i>Regulation 17</i>)		
	Indicative timetable		
7.	Consideration of comments about the Deposit Joint LDP (<i>Regulations 18 & 19</i>)	July 2014 - January 2015	April 2015 – November 2015
8.	Publish comments on alternative sites, consulting upon them - a period of 6 weeks (<i>Regulations 20 & 21</i>)	September - October 2014	June – July 2015
9.	Submitting the Joint LDP to the Welsh Government for Examination (<i>Regulation 22</i>)	February 2015	December 2015
10.	Independent Public Examination (<i>Regulation 23</i>)	June 2015	April 2016
11.	Publication of the Inspector's Report (<i>Regulation 24</i>)	March 2016	October 2016
12.	Adoption of the Joint LDP (<i>Regulation 25</i>)	May 2016	December 2016
13.	Monitoring and Reviewing	Annual report	Annual report