

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Member Champions - Role and Remit

27 June 2013

Report of the Head of Governance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree the arrangements for Council appointed Champions for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To recommend to Council that the attached documents be added to the Council's Constitution as Section 5 of Part 6 (Appointments and Designations- Member Champions).**
- (2) To recommend that Council confirms that the appointment of Member Champions be made at each Annual Council meeting and that this item be included in the business for Annual Council shown in Council procedure rule 1.1 (Part 4, Section 1 of the Constitution).**
- (3) To recommend to Council that Member Champion appointments be open to non-Cabinet Member only and to approve a generic job description for Member Champion roles (as attached at Appendix 2)**
- (4) To recommend that the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) considers amending the Members' Allowances Scheme to permit reasonable travel and subsistence claims to be made to Member Champions in carrying out their roles.**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Although there is no legislative requirement for local authorities to appoint Member Champions, initiatives at a national level have encouraged local authorities to appoint elected Members to specialise in important areas of work and drive issues forward as champions of specific areas of interest.

2.0 Reasons for Creating Member Champions

2.1 The primary reasons for creating Member Champions are:

- (a) Support and focus for an aspect of the Council's services, priorities or aims.

- (b) To emphasise and promote social inclusion.
- (c) To provide a focus for liaison with community interests.
- (d) To engage non-Cabinet Members in specific and general aspects of community leadership.
- (e) To be a catalyst for improvement and engagement.
- (f) To contribute towards efficiency and effectiveness.
- (g) To ensure the championed interest is kept in focus by the Council, Cabinet Members and the Overview and Scrutiny function.

3.0 Member Champion Appointments

- 3.1 The first Champions role to be formally created by Council was the Champion for Older People on 14 December 2011. Since then, two other Champion roles have been established, a Champion for Children and Young People and a Veterans' Champion.
- 3.2 Champions are appointed for a one year term by means of nomination and voting at the Annual Business Council meeting. If the Committee is minded to continue this arrangement, then Part 4, Section 1 of the Council Procedure Rules should be amended to show the Appointment to the Council's Member Champion Roles as an item of business for the Annual Meeting.
- 3.3 The Older People's Champion was specifically created as a non-executive role and therefore Cabinet Members cannot be nominated. In the interests of consistency, and because Cabinet Members have never been nominated for any of the Champion roles, it would seem reasonable to recommend to Council that nominations for all three Member Champion roles should be restricted to non-Cabinet Members.

4.0 Role of and Support for Member Champions

- 4.1 The role of Member Champions is to work in partnership with the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Members, and liaise with external organisations, including partner bodies. Member Champions do not have authority to commit the Council and should work within the Council's governance arrangements.
- 4.2 Arrangements are in place to ensure that there is some capacity to support Member Champions in Democratic Services. This is undertaken within existing staffing levels.

5.0 Protocol for Working Arrangements

- 5.1 An agreed protocol for the working arrangements of Member Champions in the Council's Constitution will ensure that the roles complement other established Member roles and that there are effective arrangements for liaison and co-operative working. Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is a proposed protocol adapted from the North West Member Champions' *Guidance and Advice*.

5.2 The protocol sets out a recommended framework within which Member Champions might work effectively. This will ensure that Champions, other Members, officers and community interests understand the role, its parameters and where the Champion fits into the Council's structure and leadership arrangements.

6.0 Job Descriptions

6.1 Many councils have adopted formal job descriptions for Member Champions. Attached as Appendix 2 to this report is a model job description for a non-Cabinet Member Champion. The Committee is asked to consider recommending this job description, with any appropriate amendments, to Council for inclusion in the Constitution.

7.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: To formally set out the process for the appointment of Member Champions, their designation and a Protocol for working	Option 2: Not to formally set out the process for the appointment of Member Champions, their designation and a Protocol for working
Advantages	A formal process of appointment will ensure that appointments are made in a transparent and equitable manner, while the adoption of a protocol will set down clear guidelines on the role as detailed in the report.	There are no real advantages to this option.
Disadvantages	There are no real disadvantages to this option.	Appointed Champions, officers, fellow Members and partners are unclear about the role and how they can work together. This can lead to ineffective working. Negative feedback on the Council's overall performance on promotion of social inclusion and community engagement.
Risks	There are no specific risks to this option.	The risks associated with less transparent and informal ways of appointing Champions are confusion over status and authority; no public record of the appointment lines and accountability; officers, Members, community and partners not being aware that the appointment has been made and, as a consequence, there is non-engagement; challenge to the authority of Champions; no clear focus for the role; disengagement of the appointee.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The formal designation of Member Champions will offer a number of benefits to the Council. It will assist the Council in meeting a wide range of policy targets and objectives and facilitate proper consideration of the championed issue in various Council meetings and other activities. It will improve relations with external stakeholder groups and provide a two way link with supporting organisations and the wider community. It will encourage networking between individual councillors with an interest in the championed interest.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The Council's Member Champions work effectively to promote social inclusion and equalities for Older People, Children and Young People and Veterans.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no legal obligation to appoint Member Champions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Travelling expenses paid to Member Champions in pursuit of their role are not currently an approved duty and payment has been at the discretion of the Head of Governance. This report recommends that the matter be referred to the IRP to consider formalising this as an approved duty which will have some cost implications, but it is expected this can be contained within existing budgets.

Any additional Member development requirements required to support Members in carrying out the role of Champions will need to be accommodated within the Member Development Budget and support to the Champions will be provided within existing staffing levels in Democratic Services.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources: None.

Information Services: None.

Property: None.

Open Spaces: None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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