

MEMBER CHAMPION ROLE

GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Introduction

This guidance outlines the responsibilities of a member champion including a person profile and an appointment process.

2. Background

Member champions are discretionary roles, appointed by the Leader of the Council to champion a specific cause and support the relevant cabinet member.

The member champion will work to raise the profile of their interest in the community with the approval of the cabinet member.

3. Scope of the Role

The work of the member champion should complement the work of the relevant cabinet member.

The member champion will have their work programme set by the Leader, in consultation with the relevant cabinet member and director, identifying the most relevant community groups whose work is associated with their interest and foster good working relationships with those contacts.

The member champion will report back to the cabinet member on a quarterly basis to keep them abreast of information relating to their cause. Champions are not decision makers and will be supported in their work by the appropriate resources to ensure that their role is one that informs and educates the cabinet member, making it clear what is within the council's power or influence to those they interact with outside the council.

A member champion cannot make decisions and must not commit the council in any way or in a manner that could be interpreted as being contrary to established policy and practice and must not commit the council in any way or in any manner (including financially).

Where there is potential for confusion and overlap between the role of the member champion and the relevant cabinet member, it is important that member champions are clear about their role and what they can and cannot do and must also take care not to impinge on issues outside their area of interest.

Member champions should consult with the council's communications team before speaking to the media.

Member champions speak on behalf of the council in this role and so are expected not to take any party political credit for the work they do in this role.

Member champions do not receive any further allowance for their role (except for normal expense claims permitted by council) and as such should not be compelled to take on more responsibilities than they feel comfortable committing to; they therefore should carefully consider their initial appointment to the role.

As with all councillor roles, member champions will be committed to the values of the council and the values in public office as set out in the councillors' code of conduct.

4. Profile of Member Champions

You should be:

- a) A councillor who is familiar with the topic. Member champions must not be Cabinet Members or Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees (including HOSC).
- b) A good communicator and able to use your skills to promote the benefits of the topic within the Council and externally. You should be able to persuade colleagues both within the Council and in the wider community of the benefits which the topic can offer.
- c) A consensus builder, able to bring together the various stakeholders within the authority, interest groups and the wider community.
- d) Able to see the 'bigger picture' and help develop a vision.

You should have:

- e) A commitment and passion for the topic. While a working knowledge of current issues relating to the topic would be an advantage, it is by no means essential. Professional skills within Council will complement your enthusiasm for the subject.
- f) An understanding of the workings of the Council and an appreciation of the role that each can play in promoting and encouraging the topic.
- g) A track record of supporting the topic would be an advantage.

5. Appointments Process

A member champion can be any member of the council, but not a Cabinet Member or a Chair of a relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee (including HOSC).

Member champions are appointed by the Leader in consultation with the relevant cabinet member and exist to raise the profile of issues which are important to the council.

A member champion will normally be expected to serve a one-year term.

An appointment may be made during the term of office to any new position that is agreed by the Leader and relevant cabinet member or to a position where there is a vacancy that the Leader believes should be filled.

The Leader may remove a member champion during their term in consultation with the relevant cabinet member if the conditions of their role are breached or if the need for the champion no longer exists

6. Procedure

Member Champions will work with the Leader of the Council, cabinet member and a relevant Director to agree a programme of work and engagement aligned to the work of the executive.

They will be asked to maintain a close working relationship with the Cabinet Member and report to their Cabinet Member as a minimum on a quarterly basis.

This must be formally advised at the time of appointment.