

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

Democratic Services Committee 22 April 2024

REPORT AUTHOR: Interim Head of Transformation and Democratic Services

SUBJECT: Member Champions Review

REPORT FOR: Discussion and Decision

1. Background

- 1.1 The Democratic Services Committee [DSC] at its last meeting agreed that the review of Member Champions [MCs] should be brought forward in the Committee's Work programme.
- 1.2 The Committee is asked to note the current MCs, consider whether the MC roles are required in the Council and if so whether other roles should be added to the current roles and to consider the appointment, support and governance arrangements.

2. Member Champions – roles, responsibilities, support and governance

- 2.1 In the last Council term MCs were appointed to the following roles [* denotes Cabinet Member appointed to role]:
 - Equalities
 - Older People
 - Dementia
 - Children's *
 - Welsh Language *
 - Diversity
 - Armed Forces *
 - Anti-Poverty
 - Disability
 - Anti-Slavery
- 2.2 The Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] has developed a generic role description and person specification for MCs – Appendix 1. MCs can provide a voice for traditionally under-represented groups, or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business.
- 2.3 Currently MCs have been appointed to the following - Armed Forces *, Anti-Poverty and Disability. Their views on the role are detailed in Appendix 2. These roles are all appropriate to Objectives in the Corporate Plan.

- 2.4 During the previous Council term a review of MCs was started and the DSC at that time, tasked officers with developing governance arrangements. This work was undertaken but not progressed. If the Committee recommends to Council that MC roles are to continue the promotion and appointments process and the support and governance arrangements need to be agreed. The draft governance arrangements are detailed in Appendix 3. Issues are highlighted in yellow in this document which the DSC will need to consider.
- 2.5 The other Welsh Councils have been contacted to establish their appointments of MCs and details are contained in Appendix 4.
- 2.6 The Committee is asked to consider the report and make recommendations to Council as appropriate.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="272 866 815 969">i. To consider whether the Member Champion roles are required and if so <li data-bbox="272 976 815 1043">ii. whether other roles should be added to the current roles and <li data-bbox="272 1050 815 1153">iii. to consider the appointment, support and governance arrangements and <li data-bbox="272 1160 815 1254">iv. recommend to Council as appropriate. 	<p data-bbox="874 866 1458 934">To review the appointment of Member Champions in the Council.</p>

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Section K [from Section 23 Member Role Descriptions of the Constitution – Version 16 – Effective form 18-05-2023]

Member Champion Purpose and Role

What are Member Champions?

Member Champions exist to provide a voice for traditionally under-represented groups, or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business although they may not be the responsibility of any individual or committee.

Member Champions (sometimes called lead members) are elected members who in addition to their other Council responsibilities make sure that the issue or group that they are championing are taken into account when Council policy is being developed and decisions are made. Members act as champions in areas such as children, homelessness, equalities, older people, young people, scrutiny, member support and development, health improvement and anti-poverty. There is a statutory role for a lead member of children's and young people's services with a responsibility for over-seeing the arrangements made under Sections 25 and 26 of the 2004 Children Act.

Guidance on undertaking the role with regard to the subject knowledge that members need is sometimes available from the outside bodies associated with the issue being championed for example the toolkit for older peoples' champions from the Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA]. Otherwise they will be reliant on their authority for guidance in the subject they lead on and also their role as lead member in this area.

What do they do?

Typically, the lead member will:

- Make sure that their area of interest is taken into account when developing policy or making decisions
- Ask questions about performance and resourcing for the area
- Raise the profile of the area and make the authority aware of good practice
- Engage with external bodies who work in the area
- Engage with other officers and members in relation to the role
- Engage with community groups with an interest/stake in the area
- Report action to the Council

How does their role fit within the corporate structure?

This will vary according to the area/issue that is being championed and how the authority functions. There is potential for confusion and overlap between the role of the member champion and those of the relevant Cabinet member

or overview and scrutiny members. The champion role itself could be undertaken by either the relevant Cabinet member or a non-Cabinet member.

It is therefore important that members and officers work together to agree roles and action for the area being championed and that there are mechanisms for lead members to report on their activities. It is helpful for the authority to draft a protocol which sets out what powers champions have and do not have, such as whether or not they are able to make decisions on behalf of the authority. Similarly, the appointment of champions varies between authorities, and includes appointments being made by Full Council meetings or by the Leader.

The Role Description

It is difficult to create a role description that fits with the different roles expected of champions and how they operate in the different authorities' structures. The following is a generic model which will require local adaptation, particularly to reflect the difference that may exist between a statutory role, one undertaken by a Cabinet member and a non-Cabinet lead.

Member Champion Role Description

1. Accountabilities

- To Full Council
- To the public

2. Role Purpose and Activities

Within the Council

- To promote the interest being championed within the Council's corporate and service priorities
- To promote the needs of the client group represented in the interest to the decision makers within the Council
- To work with, and support Cabinet Portfolio Holders and officers to establish strategies/policies/work plans connected with the interest
- To maintain an awareness of all matters connected with the interest
- To contribute to good practice and the continuous improvement of services and functions related to the interest
- To engage with members in matters related to the interest (including holding to account Cabinet Portfolio Holders) such as attending Scrutiny/Cabinet/Full Council meetings etc.
- Raising awareness of and taking a lead role in the development of all members and officers in relation to the interest

In the Community

- To raise the profile of the interest in the community

- To engage with citizens and community groups in matters related to the interest
- To lead and support local initiatives related to the interest

3. Values

- To be committed to the values of the Council and the following values in public office:
 - Openness and transparency
 - Honesty and integrity
 - Tolerance and respect
 - Equality and fairness
 - Appreciation of cultural difference
 - Sustainability
 - Inclusive leadership

Appendix 2

Member champion – Armed Forces – Councillor Matthew Dorrance

Question	Response
When you were appointed as a Member Champion did you receive a copy of the role description for Member Champions?	Yes
Was the role description useful? Please provide any feedback or comments	Yes
When you were approached to be a Member Champion what information were you given about the role and what was expected of you?	Yes
Please indicate from where you have received support as Member Champion – Leader/ Cabinet member/ Officer within the Council / Other Councillor / Other	Leader
Explain how you have worked with Councillors and officers as Member Champion.	I have met with officers regularly to discuss the work and the priorities, chaired meetings, provided info to members on request and highlighted the work at meetings and development.
Explain how you have worked with Cabinet Members as Member Champion and how you have been able to influence any Cabinet policies / reports etc.	Worked with Education PfH on Armed forces friendly schools, HR PfH to interview for veteran schemes.
Explain how you have worked with external organisations as Member Champion. -	I meet the Army in Wales, MoD, Battle School, RBL, SSAFA, WG, Navy and RAF regularly. I also Chair the Powys Armed Forces Partnership.
Explain how you report back to the Leader on the work you have undertaken as Member Champion.	Meet the Leader monthly.

What value do you consider your Member Champion role brings to the Council?	Significant value. It ensures we are engaged in discussion and planning for armed forces families. It also gives as a platform on a national stage.
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Member champion – Anti-poverty – Councillor Joy Jones

Question	Response
When you were appointed as a Member Champion did you receive a copy of the role description for Member Champions?	Yes. I was appointed in 2014 taking over from Councillor Gary Banks
Was the role description useful? Please provide any feedback or comments	Since 2022 the council have not worked with the anti-poverty champion in the same way as the previous council and rarely acknowledge the role. However, I have worked with the Anti-poverty Cabinet member and housing officers but often many other officers don't know it exists. There are a few who will work with me as anti-poverty champion and I work very closely with the integrated family centre staff and youth services.
When you were approached to be a Member Champion what information were you given about the role and what was expected of you?	In 2014, I was told that the poverty champion represents the council and work closely with council departments when they are considering financial challenges that would impact on residents. I was also told that I would be able to work with residents to support and stand up for them in the fight against poverty and how it effects people. When it was first set up it was great there was monthly meetings where different departments of the council would come along and give us updates of how their financial decisions were going to affect the public or council. There was an officer employed to work with myself, the community and organisations and council departments. The antipoverty champion would be recognized to represent the council in its fight to

	<p>help look for other ideas and changes to help the constituents and the county fight against poverty and deprivation. Looking and learning from other councils, charities, organisations.</p>
<p>Please indicate from where you have received support as Member Champion – Leader/ Cabinet member/ Officer within the Council / Other Councillor / Other</p>	<p>Greg was one of the officers who was employed to support the antipoverty champion and promote anti-poverty work in the Council. Now there is a cabinet member for fighting against poverty.</p>
<p>Explain how you have worked with Councillors and officers as Member Champion.</p>	<p>In the last couple of years I've been invited to 2 anti-poverty conference that has been held at Powys County Council I was not involved in preparation for it and had no contact with councillors or officers in between the 2 conferences to explain any of the ideas or strategies or policies being put in place regarding poverty, wasn't even sent an agenda or itinerary for the event. I and the cabinet member have now asked for a meeting with the officer involved in putting this event together to look at ways forward. When this unpaid role first started we had Anti-poverty meetings regularly with dedicated officers and other councillors from other wards and parties or groups working together to find ways to help fight with the crisis and issues in our wards and Powys. We also worked with many other agencies and charities looking for different things that can support people and that we could recommend make people aware of things that can help residents. The Council's Housing dept recognise the role and I'm invited to meetings as the anti-poverty champion.</p>
<p>Explain how you have worked with Cabinet Members as Member</p>	<p>I have been invited to attend the anti-poverty conference 2023 and</p>

<p>Champion and how you have been able to influence any Cabinet policies / reports etc.</p>	<p>2024. I was only invited last minute in 2024, I think they must have forgot. I did get an invitation to the Royal Welsh Show 2022 to watch the cabinet member and officers launch the poverty strategy for PCC. I have been contacted a couple of times when the portfolio holder needed support to get a vote through that will help out residents.</p>
<p>Explain how you have worked with external organisations as Member Champion.</p>	<p>I have worked with PAVO and youth services, Newtown Together, Newtown integrated family many other local charities, groups, foodbanks, fuel support groups, CAB and their advice services, water board supporting people how to get help etc youth services, 3 schools, rapid relief team, I have collected good and gifts to help put on kindness events at Christmas, Easter and summer. There are many other things I have been able to use this role for out in the community. Originally, I worked across the county but this has dwindled although many of the groups I'm in contact with cover the whole county.</p>
<p>Explain how you report back to the Leader on the work you have undertaken as Member Champion.</p>	<p>In the previous council I reported back to the Cabinet when asked and provided information on how I worked in the council and my work in the community. I did speak for 5 minutes at the 2024 anti-poverty conference about what I have done in this role.</p>
<p>What value do you consider your Member Champion role brings to the Council?</p>	<p>Don't feel that many councillors care about my role and I am aware some cllrs don't agree with the champion roles which puzzles me as it doesn't cost the council any money and we don't get extra pay or an allowance for the role. But other agencies and groups and charities really care and like to have my support and the work I do. I love the role just wish Powys County</p>

	<p>Council officers and cabinet would recognise what I do and how much knowledge I have and interest I have to develop the role to support the public and council in helping and fighting poverty and depression that effects the residents and the council. I consider having a anti-poverty champion has become more important in these difficult times.</p>
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Member champion – Disability – previously held by Councillor Ange Williams

Question	Response
When you were appointed as a Member Champion did you receive a copy of the role description for Member Champions?	No
If you've not seen the role description before, please read it and provide comments on the role description.	No answer provided
When you were approached to be a Member Champion what information were you given about the role and what was expected of you?	I was told make it your own.
Please indicate from where you have received support as Member Champion – Leader/ Cabinet member/ Officer within the Council / Other Councillor / Other	Leader
Explain how you have worked with Councillors and officers as Member Champion.	I don't think I am still a champion, this was in the last council term.
Explain how you have worked with Cabinet Members as Member Champion and how you have been able to influence any Cabinet policies / reports etc.	At that time had an officer to help me with reports and they were sent to the cabinet.

<p>Explain how you have worked with external organisations as Member Champion.</p>	<p>I worked with the Disabled Powys network, and we did work with the health board, I worked with the council Disabled officer in the 2 groups that were run by the council, we looked at issues with grants, doctors, forms and I also worked with the ALN team on school issues, ie Planning.</p>
<p>Explain how you report back to the Leader on the work you have undertaken as Member Champion.</p>	<p>Reports were sent in.</p>
<p>What value do you consider your Member Champion role brings to the Council?</p>	<p>I found great value in it, I was a mediator between residents and the council.</p>

DRAFT

Member Champions – roles, responsibilities, support and governance

Background

Member Champions [MCs] provide a voice for issues which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business that may not be the responsibility of any individual or committee.

In addition to their other Council responsibilities, MCs make sure that the issue or group which they are championing are considered when Council policy is being developed and decisions are made.

The appointment of MCs is kept under review and can change over the period of a Council term. **Options for consideration by DSC:**

1. They are appointed by the Leader and appointments are notified to the next Council meeting after their appointment. OR
2. They are appointed by Council on the recommendations of the Leader.

The following information has been produced to support a Member, who is appointed as a MC, in this role. As part of this process MCs are also asked to review these documents and processes to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Role description and person specifications

The Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] has developed a generic role description and person specification for MCs – see Appendix xx.

When a specific MC role is being considered the generic role description and person specification will be reviewed and developed, as required, to reflect the specific role being proposed. It will be important to identify any skills, knowledge or experience required by the champion to enable them to undertake the role. The individual[s] proposing the MC role should discuss the development of the role description and person specification with Democratic Services.

Development of a Member Champion role

When the development of a MC role is being proposed the following should be considered and recorded on the relevant form [Appendix xx]:

- justification for the role
- identification of any specific issues in the county which the MC should address
- details of the Cabinet Member and officers within the Council with whom the MC should develop links and the name of their main contact officer, who would provide advice and support to the role

- details of external bodies, such as statutory bodies, third sector organisations and community organisations to which links need to be made
- the required outputs, during the year for the MC, which should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, as required
- clearly state the powers of the MC to act on behalf of the Council and whether the MC has powers to make decisions and whether the MC has any delegated budget for the role
- the support available to the MC including specific officers from appropriate service areas and from Democratic Services.

The above information is important as it explains the importance of the MC role in the Council, ensures that the Councillor appointed understands their role and feels valued from the outset.

Responsibilities of a Member Champion

As with any role within the Council, when appointed as MC the Councillor must:

- observe the Members Code of Conduct
- act ethically as required by the Local Government Act 2000 and the Nolan Principles for Standards in Public Life
- treat people with respect and
- adhere to Cyber security and General Data Protection Regulations [GDPR].

In addition to the above a MC must:

- Undertake the MC role across the whole of Powys and not merely in their own local area
- Work within the powers provided to them as referred to above
- Maintain a regular link with the main contact officer and Portfolio Holder, as appropriate
- Produce an annual report to Council on the work undertaken, using the reporting template as provided in Appendix x
- Seek authorisation for attendance at any event, seminar or course funded by the Council.

Appointment of a Member Champion

Process for consideration by the DSC - options:

- When a new MC role has been established, the Leader will approach Councillor[s] who they consider would be interested in the role and information regarding the role will be provided **OR**
- When a new MC role has been established, the information regarding this role will be circulated to all Councillors and expressions of interest will be sought for a Councillor to fill the role. If more than one Councillor expresses an interest, the Leader will consider those interested **OR** the Leader with the support of the Chair of Council, Cabinet Member and Chair of Democratic Services Committee will consider each individual.

Whichever of the above is chosen there are then options on how this is reported to Council – options:

The Leader will appoint a Councillor and report on the appointment to Council.

OR

The Leader will recommend the appointment of a Councillor to Council.

It should be noted that appointments to MC roles are non-political appointments.

Reporting back on Member Champions' work

It is important that governance arrangements are in place to ensure that the MC's work is reported to Council and that they feel valued and supported in their role. Each MC will produce an annual report, for Full Council, providing information on their work during the past year in respect of expected outcomes, other work and issues arisen during the year, links made with new third sector organisations and community organisations and whether the MC role should continue for a further year. The latter will follow discussions with the Leader, Cabinet Member and Democratic Services Chair and lead officer and will outline desired outcomes for the next year.

Democratic Services will circulate an annual report template six weeks before the report is due to be presented to Council. Using this template will make it easier for MCs to provide a straightforward account of their work and support consistency of reporting across each Champion role. If a MC does not return a report within the required timescale this will be reported to Council.

The draft template is provided as Appendix A.

Appendix A

A digital version of this form will be developed once the content is agreed.

Annual report – Member Champion

Member Champion for:

Champion:

Cabinet Member & Portfolio:

Lead Officer & title:

1. Briefly explain the connections you have made with the following, in respect of your role:

- Portfolio Holder
- Officers within Powys County Council
- Councillors

Provide details of the individuals you have engaged with and an account of the type of engagement. If you have not engaged with any of the above, please explain why you have not done so.

2. Briefly explain the connections you have made with external bodies, such as statutory bodies, third sector organisations and community organisations in respect of your role. On your appointment as the Member Champion links to various external bodies may have been suggested but you may have also made connections with other organisations.

List the groups with which you have engaged and information about the type of engagement. If you have not engaged with any, please state why.

3. On your appointment as the Member Champion a number of specific issues in the County were identified, which you were asked to address. Briefly explain how you have addressed these and any outcomes as a result of your work.

4. Provide examples where the profile of your area of interest has been raised in addition to the specific information you have given in 3 above.

5. Briefly explain any changes, as a result of your work, made in the Council or planned, including:
improvements in performance and/or resourcing
decisions or development of specific policies or reference in other policies.

6. Note below any financial implications directly arising from the work you have carried out as Champion.