

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

Member Development Working Group

REPORT AUTHOR: Head of Democratic Services

SUBJECT: Member Champions Review

REPORT FOR: Discussion

1. Background

- 1.1 The Democratic Services Committee has agreed that it will review the role of Member Champions. The Council currently has 10 Member Champions. Details are provided in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The review covers the following:
- role description based on the Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] role description – Appendix 2
 - how areas/issues are selected as requiring a Member Champion
 - the appointment process – how roles are promoted with Members and how Members are selected
 - length of appointment
 - the support provided to the Member Champion – from Portfolio Holders and officers
 - the Member Champions work internally [with officers and members] and externally [statutory organisations, third sector and other]
 - governance arrangements - reporting process
 - value added by the Member Champion role.

In addition to the above the Member Champions have been asked, via SurveyMonkey, to provide their views and feedback on their appointment and for information on what they have done since their appointment. Five Member Champions have provided their views and these and their feedback is provided in Appendix 3.

- 1.2 The review also sought information from other Councils: their Member Champions, the process for appointment, governance and support etc. The responses from other Councils is detailed in Appendix 4 and this also includes any documents used.

2 Review

- 2.1 The following highlights the main issues raised in response to the review questions:
- Role description based on the Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] role description – three of the five who responded to the question

did not receive a copy of the role description. This reflects the fact that Democratic Services have not always been advised of appointments. Comments have also been made that the role descriptions need to be improved.

- How areas/issues are selected as requiring a Member Champion – The Leader has advised that the main thing to note about Member Champion roles is that they are led by Welsh Government and not specified by us as Local Authorities. We simply appoint, albeit with a degree of interest and suitability on the part of the member appointed.

The Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] has been contacted regarding Member Champions and has advised – we think the Welsh Government require only three Champions (or positions):

- by signing up to the Armed Forces Community Covenant each Local Authority will have Elected Member Armed Forces Champions. There are 22 Armed Forces Champions and a network facilitated by the Welsh Government <http://wlga.wales/armed-forces>
- Older People's Champion, which we think was a requirement as part of Welsh Government's Older People's Strategy, which Local Authorities received funding for
- There is a statutory requirement to have a lead member for children's services (though not technically a champion role) statutory duty under the Children Act 2004.

Other than this, authorities can decide which champions they have.

- The appointment process – how roles are promoted with Members and how Members are selected – The Leader has advised that occasionally, it is more suitable to appoint the Cabinet Member responsible for a particular area of service but where it is a wider specification e.g. diversity, older people, disability, it is possible to appoint from the wider membership.

No information has been provided regarding an appointment process.

- Length of appointment – None specified.
- The support provided to the Member Champion – from Portfolio Holders and officers – There seems to be variable support.
- How the Member Champions work internally [with officers and members] and externally [statutory organisations, third sector and other] – from the responses from the current Champions this seems variable.
- Governance arrangements - reporting process – This again is variable but no agreed process to support governance arrangements.

- Value added by the Member Champion role – variable.

2.2 The above information has been shared with the Democratic Services Committee and the following comments have been received, to assist with the discussions:

2.2.1 Member 1

“The Leader has advised that the main thing to note about Member Champion roles is that they are led by Welsh Government and not specified by us as Local Authorities. We simply appoint, albeit with a degree of interest and suitability on the part of the member appointed.”

I would respectfully suggest that it is up to the Authority to take a lead on this. The Authority can if it so chooses appoint others. In the chart outlining other Authorities they seem to make decisions as appropriate. It was helpful to see the response from the WLGA.

In the specific roles I was interested to read below.

WLGA Guidance:-

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.

It would appear from the above guidance that the most effective ‘Champion’ roles are those which ensure interaction with both officers and other members including Cabinet Members, where ‘protocols’ exist to support champions and how they are appointed.

From the results of the survey this appears to be mixed at the moment. You can glean from the answers who the Champions are which gives an indication of how or whether the role is effective on a personal level or for the benefit of a wider audience or accountability.

My observations in bullet points some of which are covered in the review document:-

- It is not clear why Member Champions are appointed (10 seems quite a lot and some could be amalgamated eg Diversity, Equality and Disability)
- Lack of guidance is an issue
- Not sure why existing members have been appointed
- Lack of clarity from Leader on appointments

- No clear mechanism for reporting either ad hoc on particular issues or annually to either the Leader or the full council
- Of the 3 Welsh Government recommendations Armed Forces is linked to Covenant and Childrens' Member Champion is Statutory the Older Peoples' Member Champion is advisory (with funding??) but not clear why or what they are for?
- There is an assumption of some professional or other skills outlined for Champions but this isn't clear
- The role should have a clear protocol or outputs which can be assessed annually by the Leader or full council (some authorities appoint annually at AGM which seems sensible as roles could be addressed according to strategic overview or need)
- The role of Champion should not rely on party politics
- The role of Champion should be accountable but also have an independent overview allowing deep scrutiny when required
- Members of the public should know what Member Champions there are, how to contact them and why they have been appointed as the role is clearly about ensuring openness and transparency in delivering services especially for some underrepresented groups.

2.2.2 Member 2

To add to the above, if we are to continue with Member Champions their roles do need to be defined with a role description similar to Denbighshire Council. With regards to feedback, I like the reporting template and external feedback template Merthyr Council has developed.

I question the Anti-Slavery Champion? I would like to see a Carers Champion, carers are undervalued, they offer such an important role and service to elderly in particular along with the dedication and commitment of young carers. This could be a separate Champion in its own right or added to the Champions for Older people and Children. Should we also have a Champion for Mental Health?

Some ideas for discussion...

My thoughts regarding this are that we need to hear a little something from the Member Champions at possibly County Council meetings. It would only need to be a 2 minute update of what they have done over the past few months. (nothing elaborate just a quick update) They need to be held to account of what they are doing otherwise there is no point in having them.

3 Issues for discussion

- 3.1 The Working Group is asked to consider the above. The Working Group may wish to consider the following:

- i. whether in addition to the three Member Champions required by the Welsh Government, the Council should appoint other Member Champions and if so what areas should they cover
- ii. disregarding as to whether other Member Champions should be appointed, that the following should be reviewed to support the Member Champions required by the Welsh Government: the role descriptions etc., appointments process, length of appointment, support and governance arrangements, including reports back to Council.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To consider the review to date and agree further work to be undertaken.	To review the appointment of Member Champions in the Council.

Contact Officer:	Wyn Richards, Head of Democratic Services
Tel:	01597 826375
Email:	wyn.richards@powys.gov.uk

Member Champions appointed by the Leader as at May 2019

Equalities – Cllr James Evans

Older People – Cllr Kath Roberts-Jones

Dementia – Cllr Elwyn Vaughan

Children's – Cllr Rachel Powell

Welsh Language – Cllr Myfanwy Alexander

Diversity – Cllr Matthew Dorrance

Armed Forces – Cllr Rosemarie Harris

Anti Poverty – Cllr Joy Jones

Disability – Cllr Ange Williams

Anti-Slavery – Cllr Aled Davies [Corporate Safeguarding Group May 2019]

Section T 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

Member Champion Person Specification

Within the Council

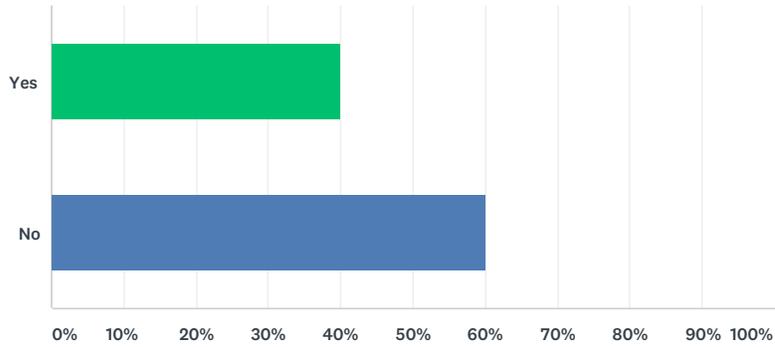
- Understanding of the area of interest being championed in terms of Council strategies and policy, good practice, improvement and national agendas and the needs of the client group
- Ability to engage with a range of members and officers around the area of interest and listening to requirements
- Ability to advocate on behalf of the area of interest within the Council

In the Community

- Understanding of the needs of the community in relation to the interest
- Ability to engage with citizens and community groups in matters related to the interest.
- Ability to lead and support local initiatives related to the interest.
- Ability to represent the position of the Council to the community in relation to the interest.

Q2 When you were appointed as a Member Champion did you receive a copy of the role description? Click this link and see pages 527-529 for role description

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	40.00% 2
No	60.00% 3
TOTAL	5

#	IF YES WAS THE INFORMATION HELPFUL?	DATE
1	It was but, i would have liked to have had more - i.e. a 'week in the life of a County Councillor'...or an opportunity to speak to someone directly in respect to the role	8/5/2019 6:22 PM
2	no as it has changed as it at tthe time the Welsh gov were involved in wanting feed back on the role	7/16/2019 10:00 AM

Q3 If you've not seen the role description before, please read it and provide comments on the role description. Click this link and see pages 527-529 for role description.

Answered: 2 Skipped: 3

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I can't open it to see it	11/19/2019 4:24 PM
2	The lay out is very 'prescriptive', it does not make interesting reading. I would like more of an emphasis on 'professionalism' and 'standards'. Also, a separate section explaining corporate parent and what this means as well as a 'flow chart' of how to make a referral to social services. Again, a visual write up in view to differing roles would provide a more human insight into the roles, rather than an endless list. The 'juggling home/work life' made me smile.	8/5/2019 6:22 PM

Member Champions Review

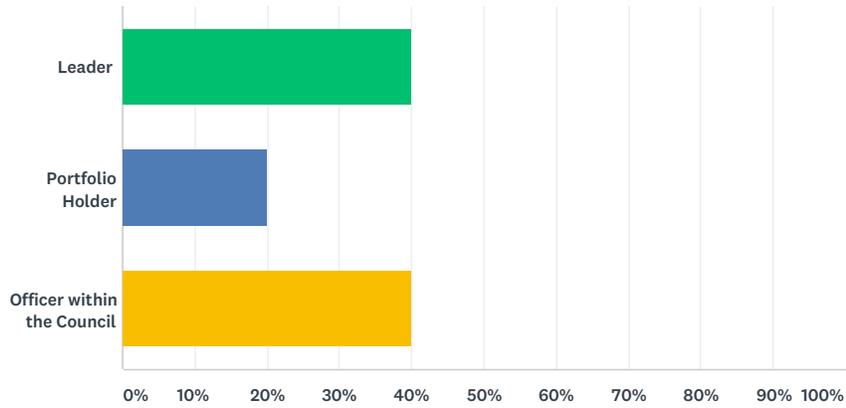
Q4 When you were approached to be a Member Champion what information were you given about the role and what was expected of you

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Nothing	11/19/2019 4:24 PM
2	I have not been able to access this so not able to answer	8/14/2019 1:19 PM
3	Very little - it was a case of learning on the job and the 'common sense' approach.	8/5/2019 6:22 PM
4	not much really, just that I was to make the role my own, and to work with people with disability in my own way. Also could I from time to time let the cabinet know what I was doing	7/16/2019 4:52 PM
5	To look into poverty and how PCC could help to look at ways of reducing it .. to look at what other authorities in the county have done	7/16/2019 10:00 AM

Q5 Please indicate from where you have received support as Member Champion

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Leader	40.00% 2
Portfolio Holder	20.00% 1
Officer within the Council	40.00% 2
TOTAL	5

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Varying means - clarification of information, professional guidance and on occasions discussing how to improve areas within the council for members.	8/5/2019 6:22 PM

Q6 Explain how you have worked with Councillors and officers as Member Champion.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I have attended some meetings and shared some information.	11/19/2019 4:24 PM
2	As has been said it has been a difficult year for me.	8/14/2019 1:19 PM
3	Mediating, clarification of information and areas identified that needed to be addressed.	8/5/2019 6:22 PM
4	I don't have anyone to work with really. Shane does help me with sending out messages, and sends me emails about groups I may be interested in.	7/16/2019 4:52 PM
5	I had an officer who was employed to work as with me but was soon taken away. After a long gap I know have a new officer who is too busy in his daily work role to be able to do this extra work. I ask member support to help when I need help. I have reported things back to council and I have been able help some councillors who have asked for help.	7/16/2019 10:00 AM

Q7 Explain how you have worked with Cabinet Members as Member Champion and how you have been able to influence any Cabinet policies / reports etc.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	None	11/19/2019 4:24 PM
2	I have had a difficult year health wise so have not been able to do very much within this role other than ensuring that older people are to the fore in all work I have been involved with	8/14/2019 1:19 PM
3	N/A	8/5/2019 6:22 PM
4	I have sent in reports on what work I have done	7/16/2019 4:52 PM
5	I fought for to ask for fair budget and highlighted the problem with people struggling to pay their council tax. I used to report to cabinet but this is no long asked for	7/16/2019 10:00 AM

Q8 Explain how you have worked with external organisations as Member Champion.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I have met some organisations but to a large extent they do their own things	11/19/2019 4:24 PM
2	As question 7	8/14/2019 1:19 PM
3	N/A - cabinet member, I work with many external organisations, professional, voluntary, general public.	8/5/2019 6:22 PM
4	I have been to, homes, care meetings, accesses groups, Disability Powys and Disability Wales AGM, I went to Aberystwyth university autism forum. collages and schools. on visits and to speak to and work with people wit disabilities. I have really enjoyed what I am doing .	7/16/2019 4:52 PM
5	I have worked to highlight foodbanks and credit unions and many other things in other areas of Powys. I work with Newtown together and have just asked them to put on an idea to swap/sell/donate school uniforms and if it works in Newtown we can maybe ask other areas in Powys to role it out in school holidays	7/16/2019 10:00 AM

Q9 Explain how you report back to the Leader on the work you have undertaken as Member Champion.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	There is no reporting back	11/19/2019 4:24 PM
2	I speak to the leaer on a regular basis	8/14/2019 1:19 PM
3	Regular opportunistic updates.	8/5/2019 6:22 PM
4	I speak to her and other relevant cabinet members and I have done a written report to the hole council.	7/16/2019 4:52 PM
5	I tell her when there is something to report but no longer report to cabient	7/16/2019 10:00 AM

Q10 What value do you consider your Member Champion role brings to the Council?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	None. It is a total waste of time. No power, or influence, no resources, an unclear role.	11/19/2019 4:24 PM
2	I believe it is important to Champion older persons as Powys has a lages number of older people not all of which are able to have their voices heard, therefore it is vital someone voices concerns for them	8/14/2019 1:19 PM
3	Apologies - I don't understand the question here. All joint working together is valuable but, it is often how you undertake it that demonstrates it as its most effective.	8/5/2019 6:22 PM
4	I can put forward the views and needs to all about life in Powys as a disabled person, and find out how we can help with day to day live	7/16/2019 4:52 PM
5	I hope it highlights that we have many people living in poverty in the county and that we need to work and look at different ways or helping to remove it and make public a better standard of life .. as poverty is not just these on benefits it is many hard working people who are hit and we are seeing more children in poverty. Not forgetting the are many forms of poverty such as fuel, medical, period, food, etc	7/16/2019 10:00 AM

Q11 Use the space below to explain what you have done as Member Champion since your appointment

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Met some organisations.	11/19/2019 4:24 PM
2	As said in Question 7 I have not been able to do as much as I have been able to.	8/14/2019 1:19 PM
3	There is too much to put in here but, it will be on my annual report. Apologies.	8/5/2019 6:22 PM
4	spoken to lots of people with disability's, I am a member of disability Powys now. I have helped to change the group and make it a more friendly place to belong. I do lots of meetings all over Powys. I have been down to Devon to look at some homes and schools. I have been to school services and collages. I regularly go to access group meetings. I have also done work with Pavo and credi for carers and really enjoy all I do.	7/16/2019 4:52 PM
5	Visited food bank and other organisations in towns across Powys worked with Newtown together and just suggested that we hold an event for a uniform swap which will be don't in connection with the family centre and is some thing that could be rolled out over Powys. High lighted the poverty problems in the county and meet with many residents to help sign post them to get help	7/16/2019 10:00 AM

Member Champions – other Councils

Council	No. Champions	Appointed by	Role description	Protocols re support etc	Other information
Denbighshire	4	Council AGM - Corporate Governance Committee (the audit committee) considered suggestions and recommend to Council	WLGA		<p>No powers. Services and lead members expected to positively engage with the champions. The champions commit to putting their time towards understanding the issues, being an advocate for them by raising and promoting matters as appropriate.</p> <p>Information provided after this table.</p>
Caerphilly CBC	12	Council AGM – see *	WLGA	None	<p>* Youth Champion, election process, undertaken within schools and youth groups across borough and has a separate role description.</p> <p>Information provided after this table.</p>

Council	No. Champions	Appointed by	Role description	Protocols re support etc	Other information
Merthyr CBC	20	Leader of the Council	WLGA	Yes – details provided	Sometimes unclear on what exactly was required of the Champion. Councillors and officers insisted that a Champion was required, they couldn't always back that up with evidence as to why. Information provided after this table.
Swansea		Leader's gift to appoint, but must update at the next Council as to who is appointed. Appointments renewed at Annual Meeting.	WLGA	Looking at getting them to provide feedback on an annual basis to Council or preferably to all Councillors on an annual basis via email.	Information provided after this table.
Flintshire	1 – since 2013 Armed Forces Covenant Champion		None		Reviewed about 10 years ago and decided to abolish all other Member champions.
Blaenau Gwent CBC	9	Council	WLGA used as a guide	Considering development of	Periodic reviews to ensure they remain relevant on the

Council	No. Champions	Appointed by	Role description	Protocols re support etc	Other information
				reporting system. Officer support in place	contemporary issues, we have suggested some reduction to the current list 2019-04-11 DSC advised historically the Authority had a significant number of Member Champions and it was agreed that Member Champions be linked to Corporate responsibilities, i.e. Children Champion, Older Person Champion, it was key they were also linked to our statutory responsibilities.