

CONSTITUTION AND ETHICS COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
17 JULY 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Rochelle Tapping, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Coles, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Governance	
Contact Officer(s):	Dan Kalley, Senior Democratic Services Officer	Tel. 01733 296334

APPOINTMENT TO COUNCIL CHAMPIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Director of Law and Governance	Deadline date: Full Council October 2023
<p>It is recommended that the Constitution and Ethics Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the feedback from the Council's Scrutiny Committee Group Representatives as to the potential to appoint Council Champions which is included at Appendix 1. 2. Agree to recommend to Council the adoption of the following items <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Member protocol on Champions included at appendix 1 including details of who will appoint the Champions 2. Changes to the Constitution Standing Orders to allow the appointment of Council Champions and ensure an annual review (included Appendix B) 3. The adoption of the following Council Champions, in addition to the Armed Forces Champion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree Champion • Dementia Champion • City Centre Champion 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to the Constitution and Ethics Committee following a request from the Committee Chair and as part of feedback from the Scrutiny Committee's.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is for the Constitution and Ethics Committee to review the feedback and any suggestions made from the Scrutiny Committee Group Reps as to the appointment of any Council Champions.

- 2.2 This report is for the Constitution and Ethics Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.7.2.1

Authority to oversee the operation of the Council's Constitution and authority to make recommendations to Full Council as to amendments and improvements to the Council's Constitution (including the codes and protocols) subject to the receipt and consideration of a report prepared by the Monitoring Officer, with the exception of those matters under the remit of the Executive.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 **APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL CHAMPIONS**

- 4.2 At its meeting on 6 October 2022, the committee agreed to discuss the option of Councillor Champions for Council functions. It was agreed at the meeting that the Council's Scrutiny Committees would be approached to explore whether there was any appetite to appoint specific Champion roles for Council functions. Following consultation with Scrutiny Committee Group Representatives/s during the last municipal year it was highlighted that there were two areas that could potentially have champions, this being a City Centre Champion and Dementia Champion. It was felt overall that having extra champions could potentially add to the workloads of Councillors. At the time of writing there had been no expressions of interest made to officers to carry out these roles. However, this was something that could be revisited at a future date.

Group representatives of the Constitution and Ethics Committee at the latest work programming meeting agreed for this item to be re-visited. The report was also meant to be presented to the committee at the meeting in February, however it was agreed to be deferred to allow further work to be completed.

- 4.3 Members are also reminded that the Chair of the Constitution and Ethics Committee for the previous municipal year had been asked by the Woodland Trust to be a Councillor Tree Champion. A role description was circulated to members of the committee back in October and is outlined below in 4.8 and as an Annex to Appendix A.

- 4.4 There are no restrictions on each political group from appointing within their groups a spokesperson or a group representative on certain issues. This is an informal arrangement that each group can carry out if it wishes.

- 4.5 Members are reminded that Cabinet Members cover a number of different portfolios and service areas within the Council and act as the representative for those areas when making decisions which affect the Council.

- 4.6 At the current time the only example of a Council Champion is the Armed Forces Champion, which has been agreed in the past, which includes the role of being the point of contact for queries from ex-Forces personnel who need help and assistance, signposting people to relevant support and helping unblock any problems that people have accessing services. This appointment is formally agreed at Annual Council.

- 4.7 Group Leaders have also been consulted and although no suggestions were put forward were happy for the Scrutiny Committee's to make any suggestions, of which only two suggestions as outlined above were put forward.
- 4.8 Members could agree to define what a Council Champion is, and an example of a short description is below and was presented to the meeting in October 2022. This would also be included in the Member Champion Protocol which could form part of the Council Constitution.

What are Member Champions?

Member Champions exist to provide a voice on the Council or to ensure particular issues are kept at the forefront of council business. The member champions will have no decision making responsibilities and/or powers.

Member Champions 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 and/or promoted. They will be in place for a term of 1 year from the date of appointment.

What do they do?

Typically, the Member Champion will:

- Make sure that their area of interest is taken into account or promoted when liaising with the Executive, relevant Scrutiny Committees and key officers.
- 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 findings to the Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committee or Full Council as appropriate.

- 4.9 There are Councils across the Country who have appointed Councillor Champions, this has been done in a number of different ways and some examples are below:

- [Stockport Council](#) – Members need to notify the Democratic Services Manager prior to the Annual Council meeting of any expressions of interest in being a member champion to one of the roles specified or suggest any new roles. The Democratic Services Manager will then present these to Group Leaders. It is important to note that local community organisations can also be involved in the process to ensure the correct champions are put forward. Following this the Leader is responsible for making these appointments and report these to the Annual Council meeting.
- [West Norfolk Council](#) – The Leader of the Council is responsible for appointing member champions at the Annual Council meeting. Any member can be a champion and a specific list is produced outlining the roles that a champion is appointed to. The Leader will also have the responsibility to remove a champion if they are not performing their role. These are updated following local elections.
- [Lancaster Council](#) – Member champions are appointed by Council at the Annual Council meeting and cannot be a Cabinet Member.
- Somerset West and Taunton [Council](#) – Member champions will be appointed at the discretion of the Leader having consulted Group Leaders, who can nominate members from within their group. This is still subject to ratification at Full Council.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The recommendation links to the follow Council Corporate Priorities:

4. Sustainable Future City Council

- *How we Work*
- *How we Serve*

- *How we Enable*

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Group Leaders have been consulted on any suggestions for Council Champions that they feel would be appropriate and could be recommended to be appointed at Annual Council each year. Members of the Council's Scrutiny Committee's Group Representatives have also been consulted to highlight specific Champion roles.

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 7.1 If agreed that the appointment of Council Champions is recommended to full council and these are subsequently agreed by Council to be appointed then it will be important to review these appointments at Annual Council, following local elections.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 To update the members of the Committee on feedback from the Scrutiny Committee Group Reps.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 That the proposal to include member champions is not taken any further. There is currently nothing stopping groups from appointing a champion or spokesperson to represent their groups views on aspects for which the Council have a lead on.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 10.1 There are no financial implications arising from the report.

Legal Implications

- 10.2 There are no legal implications in respect of what is proposed. If the recommendations are agreed by this Committee this will involve a Full Council decision and subsequent change to the constitution to implement the change.

Equalities Implications

- 10.3 There are none.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A - Local Protocol Member Champions
Appendix B – Track Changes – Council Standing Orders, Part 4, Section 1, PCC Constitution .