

Local Protocol – Council Champions Contents

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Council Champions

1. Introduction

1.1 Council champions are elected members who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council's business. The main responsibility of each member champion is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent.

2. Appointment of Council Champions

2.1 The Leader of the Council is responsible for appointing member champions. Any member of the Council may be a council champion. The first Council Champions are being suggested as:

- (a) Armed Forces
- (b) Trees
- (c) City Centre
- (d) Dementia
- (e) Disability Champion
- (f) Active Travel Champion

2.2 Council champions will generally be appointed on annual basis in years where a local election takes place. However, an appointment may be made during the year to any new position that is established or to a position where there is a vacancy. The Leader will notify the Chief Executive in writing about any appointment.

2.3 Any appointment should have due regard to the suitability for the role and relevant national and local guidance.

2.4 A council champion may be removed from office at any time by Leader by written notice to the council champion, which will also be copied to the Chief Executive.

2.5 Any council champion may resign from office by giving written notice to the Leader and the Chief Executive.

2.6 Appointments to Corporate Parenting Committee champions, are appointed on an annual basis by Committee Members. These roles are separate from the role of council champions.

3. Role of Council Champions

3.1 All council champions will have a job description setting out their respective roles. These will be developed in consultation with the Leader and the champion concerned. Examples of possible roles for champions that may be appropriate to include in a job description are set out in Annex 1 to this protocol.

4. The Parameters of the Council Champion Role

4.1 All council champions must act reasonably in their role and recognise and work effectively within the political management and working arrangements adopted by the Council.

4.2 A council champion cannot make decisions on behalf of the Council (unless the council champion is a Cabinet Member who will still continue to have authority to make decisions in respect of his portfolio area) 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. They may, however, confirm a position as stated in a published policy.

5. Cabinet Members – Working Relationship

5.1 The first point of liaison on all relevant issues for the Council Champion will be through the Cabinet Member/Leader.

5.2 Cabinet Members will normally:

- (a) acknowledge the right of council champions to be consulted on matters relating to their area of interest;
- (b) take full account of any views offered by council champions prior to any decision taken (by a Cabinet member with delegated authority) on matters within their area of interest;
- (c) co-operate with council champions in the formulation of any action plans they have agreed with the relevant Cabinet Member; and
- (d) in liaison with the Leader consider nominating the relevant council champion to represent the Council at a relevant conference/seminar on the subject matter of the council champion's interest.

6. Accountability

6.1 At the beginning of each municipal year, each council champion may agree with the relevant Cabinet member and officers a programme of activity, with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) targets, taking into account the Council's priorities.

6.2 The council champion will report into their Cabinet Member regularly and in consultation with them into the Member's bulletin on at least an annual basis to keep the Council updated on their work.

7. Training

7.1 All council champions will normally have the opportunity to attend appropriate training courses contained in the Council's Member Development Programme.

8. Attendance at Seminars and Conferences

8.1 The attendance by council champions at conferences/seminars relevant to their roles will only be approved following consultation with the Leader in consultation with the Monitoring Officer. When approved, expenses may be claimed.

9. Allowances

9.1 None of the council champions are entitled to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for carrying out their role.

10. Interests

10.1 Council champions are reminded to ensure any interests they may have are declared at all appropriate points.

Annex 1 – Job Role Council Champions

What are Council Champions?

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

Council 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 council 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.