

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 6th October 2020

Subject: The role of Member champions

Report From: The Chief Executive

Report by: Paddy May, Strategy Unit

Wards affected: All

Key decision: NO

Full Council decision: NO

1. Purpose of report

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with information on the role of Member champions and to see whether Members wish to formally change or emphasise certain aspects of this role description.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1.1 Note that there are currently 5 active Member champions
- 2.1.2 Note that the Standards Committee in 2010 previously agreed a protocol for Member champions which is still relevant today
- 2.1.3 Consider whether any change to this protocol is required and in particular whether there needs to be a different agreed process for selecting new Member champions
- 2.1.4 Agree that each Champion should do an annual report to Council on relevant activity over the last 12 months

3. Background

3.1. At the July Cabinet meeting a request was made that a paper come back to Cabinet on the role of Member champions. Currently there are 5 active Member champions and these are as follows:

- Armed Forces Champion (Cllr Vernon-Jackson with support from Cllr Jonas and Cllr Coles)
- Mental Health Champion (Cllr Winnington)
- Housing & Preventing Homelessness Champion (Cllr Sanders)
- Heritage Champion (Cllr Hunt)

- LGBT+ Children & Young People Champion (Cllr Udy)
- 3.2. In addition there are two Member champion roles that have not yet been filled and these are the roles of City of Service Champion and Third Sector Champion.
- 3.3. A report to the Standards Committee (with co-opted Members from the Governance & Audit Committee) in January 2010 discussed the roles of Member champions. This report included a protocol, attached as Appendix 1. Whilst this was developed some time ago, it is still relevant and provides a good description on what the role of a Champion should be and what responsibilities a Champion should have.
- 3.4. This protocol states that the role of a Member Champion should be to:
"To act as a positive focus for officers and the local community at elected member level in respect of the relevant section of the community or range of activities designated by the Council through its committees or panels so as to ensure that full consideration is given to the impact of Council activities and decisions upon that section of the community or range of activities."

The protocol also states five simple key tasks for Member champion.

- 3.5. One of the current Member Champion roles that works particularly well is the Armed Forces Champion. Attached at Appendix 2 is the agreed profile, purpose and role for the Armed Forces Member Champion for each of the 4 authorities in the partnership. This was based on a similar approach taken in Kent. There are a number of reasons why the Armed Forces Champion has been successful including that:
- it is a cross-cutting issue that doesn't neatly belong in any one area
 - external stakeholders have clear expectations of what they want from the role
 - the inclusion of shadow roles
 - there is a clear role and profile for the person
 - it has particularly high relevance for this city
- 3.6. It is recommended that whenever a Member Champion role is created, a profile, role and description should be agreed. The protocol states that any Committee or Panel may designate Champions from among Elected Members of the City Council and any such appointment should be confirmed at the next Full Council. Cabinet is asked whether it wishes this process to remain or whether it wishes to have an alternative approach to agreeing new Champions. It is also recommended that Champions should do an annual report to Council on relevant activity over the last 12 months.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1. The protocol that went to the Standards Committee in 2010 still provides a good description for the role of a Member Champion and what the responsibilities should be. However, Cabinet may wish to update aspects of this protocol, in particular the mechanism by which any new Member champion can be agreed.

5. Integrated Impact assessment

5.1. An integrated impact assessment has been completed.

6. Legal Implications/City Solicitor comments

6.1 There are no legal implications of relevance and the protocol acts as a sensible tool in prescribing the nature and effect of champion status and function.

7. Director of Finance & Resources comments

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

Appendices:

Appendix 1 -Member Champion Protocol agreed by Standards Committee in January 2010.

Appendix 2 - Job role for the Armed Forces Member Champion

Signed by:

.....
DAVID WILLIAMS
Chief Executive

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

..... Signed by:

Member Champions' Protocol

CHAMPIONS

1. Appointment of Champions

Any Committee or Panel at its discretion, may from time to time, designate Champions from among Elected Members of the City Council and any such appointment should be confirmed at the next full council meeting.

2. Term of Office

Councillors who are designated as Champions shall hold office from the date of the Council Meeting at which their appointment is confirmed until:

- (a) they resign from office;
- (b) they are suspended from being Councillors under Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (although they may resume office at the end of the period of suspension);
- (c) they are no longer Councillors; or
- (d) until the start of the next Annual Meeting of the Council, except that the Council may remove them from office earlier at its discretion.

3. Role and Functions

To act as a positive focus for officers and the local community at elected member level in respect of the relevant section of the community or range of activities designated by the Council through its committees or panels so as to ensure that full consideration is given to the impact of Council activities and decisions upon that section of the community or range of activities.

4. Key Tasks

- (a) To make contact with local organisations concerned with the designated section of the community or range of activities and to establish effective and regular consultation arrangements with those organisations.
- (b) To represent the views of such organisations to officers, the Council, the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Panels and other committees, on all relevant aspects of the Council's activities.
- (c) To act as an advocate on behalf of the relevant section of the community or range of activities within the council as an organisation and its wider community
- (d) To become familiar with the needs and priorities of the relevant section of the community, or range of activities concerned, and to weigh up interests expressed in order to provide sound advice on the implications of alternative courses of action
- (e) To feedback decisions of the Council and to explain the Council's position on specific issues of concern to relevant organisations and to individuals involved.

**Elected Armed Forces Champion's for Gosport,
Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton**

The profile:

A member of the Cabinet with an interest in the Armed Forces community;

Some Armed Forces experience would be an advantage;

Appointed by the Council (on the recommendation of the Executive/Cabinet) to emphasise the importance that the Council places on the role.

The purpose:

Underlying all actions is the objective to raise the profile of the needs of the Armed Forces community (Serving personnel, both regular and reserve, their families, veterans and Cadets), within the Council's.

The role:

Chairing and maintaining awareness of all relevant developments of the Solent Armed Forces Covenant Partnership and associated task groups.

Close liaison with the appointed Covenant lead officer and programme manager, with particular reference to the council's obligations undertaken through the Armed Forces Covenant.

Close liaison with the Mayor/Chairman on all ceremonial matters in which the Mayor/Chairperson should be involved (e.g. Armed Forces Day, Armistice Day).

Keeping local members of parliament apprised of the activity within the Council in relation to the Armed Forces community.

A lead in ensuring all areas of council business take into account the needs of the local Armed Forces community.

To liaise as appropriate with local members of the Armed Forces, in particular the appropriate Task Commander (appointed by 11th Infantry Brigade) to assist in understanding where help maybe most needed and to in turn enable a better understanding within the Armed Forces of the limitations and different responsibilities of local government and it's decision-making processes.

To be a focal point for liaison with businesses/local organisations within the local authority to promote the Armed Forces Covenant and encourage their engagement with the Armed Forces, Defence Employers Recognition Scheme and SE RFCA (South East Reserve Forces and Cadet Association). Close liaison with the Council's business/economic development section (or equivalent) on these matters will be required.

To support local Cadet units by acting as the key link with the local authority, and to look to provide local ceremonial, Remembrance and Cadet Adult volunteering opportunities.

To sponsor an annual report to the executive/cabinet detailing the Council's actions over the past year in respect of the obligations to the Covenant.