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Title of meeting:	Cabinet
Subject:	Member Champions Annual Report
Date of meeting:	21 March 2023
Report by:	Senior Local Democracy Officer
Wards affected:	N/A

1. Requested by

As part of the revised Member Champions Protocol agreed at the Community & Central Services Decision Meeting held on 5 January 2022 there is a requirement for Member Champions to submit an annual update to Cabinet on their work during the preceding municipal year.

2. Purpose

To update Cabinet on the work of Member Champions during the 2022/23 municipal year.

3. Information Requested

The below reports have been submitted by the Member Champions for information.

Heritage - Cllr Lee Hunt

My thrust is to see Norrish Central Library 'listed'. It is a living example of 1950s 'Brutalist' architecture. After the demise of The Tricorn it's important to protect this building.

Situated with Victoria Park conservation area the building enjoys a level of protection; I understand inside is 'listed'. With COVID and its hangover plus the well-known issues surrounding our planning department I considered it unreasonable to ask our team to take on this additional work.

Happily our newly appointed Planning Policy Manger has kindly agreed to help me make progress.

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LGBTQ+ & Young People - Cllr Suzy Horton

It is important that the person in this role is chosen by young people and Cabinet have decided that this role should be open for Members of all parties to put themselves forward. Due to school holidays and organisational challenges, the hustings and election of the LGBTQ Champion did not occur until 12 October and the appointment was made official at The Cabinet meeting on 25th October 2022.

In the last 4 months I have focused on the following areas:

- Meeting with the Specialist Support workers and better understanding the service and what the key issues are in meeting the needs of young LGBTQ people
- Supporting the current research to develop an action plan or strategy that will enable us to think about how we might serve to the needs of intersectional LGBTQ+ communities.
- Working cross directorate/ Portfolio and positioning the service as one of equalities
- Continued working with Stonewall
- Supporting other established groups in the city (Downtown, Portsmouth Pride)
- Joining Portsmouth Pride Stakeholder network
- Working with the Youth Cabinet in supporting their focus on EDI issues in schools and visit to 4U
- Communications input during LGBTQ History month
- Being the best ally - on social media, attending events eg Vigil at Portsmouth Cathedral for Brianna Ghey.

Future Plans:

- Pilot project on visits to schools on relational work with LGBTQ focus
- Stonewall Member Training

Armed Forces Liaison - Cllr Gerald Vernon - Jackson

Portsmouth is the home of the Royal Navy, and the armed forces are a significant part of the fabric of the city. 2022 was a busy year for the Armed Forces Champion with several landmark events, including Falkland's 40th commemorations, a new statutory duty, launch of a refreshed needs assessment and work to prepare for revalidation of the Council's prestigious Gold award for the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). All of this has been undertaken alongside the usual full calendar of remembrance and recognition events, work to continue to strengthen partnership work, continuing to be a point of contact for residents that are seeking support with the resolution of complex cases and chairing the Council's Armed Forces staff forum. The cross-cutting nature of the agenda has required a whole Council approach to ensuring the Council meets its objectives and commitments in relation

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to the Armed Forces Community, and the Armed Forces Champion thanks all members who have shown their support to the agenda in 2022. It is a tribute to the Councils collective effort that The News reported Portsmouth was 'one of the best places to be a veteran in the UK'. A lot has been achieved since the Armed Forces liaison member's last report, but there is still more work to do, and 2023 is expected to be an equally productive year.

- 1. Respect and Recognition:** A full programme of events has taken place throughout the year. Of most note was Falkland's 40th. The Council led events with thousands of people attending a parade that saw hundreds of veterans marching in Old Portsmouth as part of a ceremony and the unveiling of a new memorial plaque by the Square Tower. This was the biggest Falkland's parade anywhere in the country of veterans, leading local news to herald Portsmouth as 'the very best city in the UK when it comes to honouring Britain's military heroes'¹. June also saw the Armed Forces Champion lead a flag raising ceremony for Armed Forces Week, followed by Armed Forces Day celebrations taking place in the historic dockyard with Portsmouth schools participating for the first time in Junior Field Gun events. Other events including Trafalgar Day, Remembrance and Holocaust memorial have also been commemorated.
- 2. A new statutory duty:** In November 2022 new legislation came into force that placed a duty on local authorities, and other public bodies, to uphold Covenant Principles. This reinforced expectations in respect of Education, Health, and Housing functions. The Armed Forces Champion oversaw work to ensure that the Council was ready for the new duty. This has included policy reviews, and a revised 'local offer' for Council customers in respect of Health, Education and Housing which has been published; this clearly articulates how the duty is applied in relevant policies and processes and demonstrates the Council's commitment to a tailored response. The Armed Forces Champion has also sought to encourage other key partners in their readiness through their role as chair of the Solent Covenant Partnership Board.
- 3. Partnership Work:** Portsmouth continues to be the leading member of the Solent Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Board (SAFCPB) which brings together

¹ Portsmouth News (20/06/2022) Portsmouth hailed the best city in the UK to mark military events after thousands join Falklands 40 commemorations, available from: [Portsmouth hailed the best city in the UK to mark military events after thousands join Falklands 40 commemorations | The News](#)

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Portsmouth, Southampton, Gosport, and Isle of Wight Councils to effect change. The Solent Armed Forces Covenant Partnership has developed a strong positive reputation locally and nationally over the past five years and is seen by many in the local military community as an exemplar. The Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT), commissioned by the MOD recently to review Covenant delivery nationally, concluded that clusters such as the Solent Armed Forces Covenant Partnership are a preferred collaboration model moving forward, for effective co-ordination and economy of scale. As chair of the Board the Armed Forces Champion has sought to continue to affirm its position and strengthen its reach. This has included liaison with the Integrated Care Board and Local Base commander, in respect of health and housing issues. Forward work includes encouraging wider involvement from neighbouring boroughs, including Havant and Fareham, and formally twinning the Council and HMNB Portsmouth.

4. Understanding Need: In 2021 the SAFCPB was successful in drawing in additional funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund to refresh the Solent Armed Forces Community needs assessment previously published in 2018. Work on the refresh of the assessment commenced in November 2021, led by Public Health. The Armed Forces Champion has maintained oversight of the work throughout 2022 culminating in leading the completed assessments launch event in February 2023. The event brought together leaders from the local military, National Covenant Team, voluntary and community sector and health providers to consider findings and start to develop an action plan.

a. Headlines from the assessment:

- Estimated total size of Armed Forces Community in Portsmouth (that is serving personnel, veterans, reservists, and their families) is 37,500.
- Councils and other partners work well together to meet the Armed Forces Covenant Duty.
- Funding constraints on public services and the pandemic have impacted on Armed Forces communities and on public services' ability to support them.
- Policies are in place to ensure no disadvantage in access to social housing.
- Attainment of Service children equal to or better than peers. Challenges remain with impact of increased mobility.
- Access to health services is a challenge for the Armed Forces Community (like the civilian population), access to more data is needed to better understand Armed Forces specific issues.

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- b. In relation to Health the Armed Forces Champion has directly supported work with colleagues from the Navy, Terrance Higgins Trust (THT), and other partners to develop a paper on the sexual health of military personnel in Portsmouth. This paper has formed part of the Health Needs Assessment for Portsmouth, setting out the opportunities currently available and the ambitions relating to sexual health provision for military personnel visiting and living in the city. The long-term ambitions are to facilitate equitable access to sexual health services for individuals in the Armed Forces through transformation and quality improvements across a wider geographical area.
- c. Details of the needs assessment launch event were published in The News². The full needs assessment can be accessed on the Council's website³.

5. Armed Forces Staff Form: The Armed Forces Champion has continued to chair the Council's Armed Forces Staff forum, which now has a distribution list of over 60 staff. In October 2022 the staff forum met in person for the first time since 2020. The meeting was hybrid to maximise the number of staff able to attend. The group generated several actions, including clarifying guidance for managers in respect of family member leave requests associated with deployment and seeking to strengthen links with the Careers Transition Service (CTP). Members of the forum were also invited to become involved in the Council's refreshed values work.

6. Defence Employers Recognition Scheme (ERS): In 2018 the Armed Forces Champion received the prestigious ERS gold award on behalf of the Council, in recognition of the authority's work to support the Armed Forces Covenant in respect of employment. The Council will need to renew its Gold award in 2023 and to do this it will need to demonstrate, as an organisation, it has maintained and further developed its commitment in relation to advocacy of defence and employment of members of the Armed Forces community. Throughout 2022 the Armed Forces Champion has supported efforts to prepare for revalidation. This has included publicly announcing intent to renew, overseeing the Council's Covenant reaffirmation process which took place at a special ceremony at HMS King Alfred in June 2022 as part of the Reserves

² Portsmouth News (17/02/23) - Civic Chiefs in Portsmouth, Gosport, Southampton and Isle of Wight work together to find new ways to support regions Armed Forces community, available from: [Civic chiefs in Portsmouth, Gosport, Southampton and Isle of Wight work together to find new ways to support region's armed forces community | The News](#)

³ The Armed Forces Community within the Solent Needs Assessment (2022) available from: [The Armed Forces Community Within The Solent \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#)

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Day activities, and advocating for the employment of members of the armed forces community to stakeholders.

- 7. Case work:** The Armed Forces Champion has continued to support complex cases, directly liaising with Military charities, Council departments, and lobbying the MOD on veterans and service family's behalf to resolve issues presented. In 2022 there has been a particular focus on service families' accommodation, with the Armed Forces Champion leading a campaign to help improve the experience of service families, in recognition of the link between living conditions and retention in the service. This work will be on-going throughout 2023, with an initial meeting set up with the MOD People Accommodation policy team scheduled for March this year.
- 8. Conclusion:** 2022 has been a busy year for the Armed Forces Champion, with several landmark events including Falkland's 40th commemorations, a new statutory duty, and launch of a refreshed needs assessment. Work has been undertaken to prepare for revalidation of the Council's prestigious ERS gold award, alongside continuing to develop partnership working, resolve complex cases and lobby for improvement. The Council's Falkland's 40th events, local offer in respect of Housing, Health and Education and refresh of the needs assessment are all demonstration of the Council's on-going commitment to the Armed Forces community. The cross-cutting nature of the agenda has required a whole Council approach to ensuring the Council meets its objectives and commitments in relation to the Armed Forces Community. The Armed Forces Champion thanks all members who have shown their support to the agenda in 2022.

The year ahead is anticipated to be another busy year, with key priorities being to develop an action plan to meet the recommendations of the needs assessment, officially twin the Council with the HMNB Portsmouth, progress discussion in respect of improving conditions in service accommodation and continuing to strengthen the Solent Armed Forces Covenant partnership as a vessel for strengthening delivery of the covenant within the region.

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Third Sector City of Service - Cllr Stuart Brown

The volunteer recognition project started last year has been running a trial scheme managed by the Hive with two organisations. I had expected an update on this late last year which has not yet been received, hence the short report. I fully expect there to be more information forthcoming late this year.

Women, Children & Domestic Violence - Cllr Kirsty Mellor

- Supported a number of women fleeing domestic abuse to access advocacy, housing, and non-molestation orders.
- Supported a woman who was sexually assaulted on a bus in Portsmouth and convened a meeting of PCC, the bus company, police and trade union reps together to find a way forward so that everyone was best equipped to deal with future sexual assaults on buses.
- Encouraged the bus company to train their staff in dealing with disclosure of sexual assault linking them up with the Licensing service to deliver the relevant training and to be part of a local and national campaign in raising awareness. Liaised with the union Unite, to grow the Get Me Home Safely campaign.
- Worked with Superintendent Clare Jenkins to open a police inquiry into a case of sexual assault that was poorly handled by the police.
- Supported a victim during a restorative justice session.
- Attended relevant training.

Nature - Cllr Kimberly Barrett

Portsmouth has been on an exciting and ambitious journey regarding Nature since my last report. It is widely recognised and supported across the city that greening the city, increasing biodiversity, the climate emergency and the protection of land and ocean-based environments are extremely important to many people. Therefore, nature, environment and climate actions are considered at every opportunity in the council. I am very proud to show what the Council have been doing this past year that brings nature into the heart of every decision that we make:

- A new 'climate action' newsletter was developed in 2022 and is now sent out fortnightly to officers, businesses and any residents who wish to sign up. They can also respond back with ideas and suggestions.

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- Over 400 adult trees, 3000 whips and hundreds of shrubs have been planted across the city.
- Several Council vehicles have changed from Diesel to HVO (Hydro Vegetable Oil) from the green and clean team to the waste team to the Port.
- In May 2022, a motion for the ocean was unanimously accepted at Full Council. Since then, a number of actions have specified what we need to work on and a subsequent report was submitted first to Cabinet and then to Full Council by the end of 2022.
- Work continues with the planning department with the new draft local plan to include specific policies around the environment.
- An ambitious target has been set to increase our tree canopy cover from 9.8% to 14% over the coming years. This has led to funding being received from various organisations to help us plant more trees and whips. A target has been set to plant 660 trees and 2900 whips by the end of the following winter period with a further 481 trees and 16,188 whips planted the by the end of the winter period after that.
- A new climate strategy was approved by the Cabinet to provide the basis for climate change activities that have been undertaken in the last year and that will continue to direct and support future activities at the council. Furthermore, an internal energy use working group was developed to create solutions to make the Civic Offices operations more environmentally and financially responsible.
- 3 out of 5 phases of the sea defence scheme have now been completed. 18 tidal pools have been installed, a bird island has been created out of the old material and 75 new trees planted and approximately 2000m² of wildflower seed sewn to increase biodiversity. We are also hugely proud of the ecoformliner mould, a worldwide first moulded into parts of the sea wall to provide a platform for many of the harbour's species to colonise on. When established, vegetation should absorb wave energy, reduce salt ingress and temperature fluctuations, and create a more stable environment. Future projects included in the sea defence work will see further greenery planted and bee posts installed to encourage wildlife.
- A new rain garden has been installed on London Road which will allow for more sustainable drainage and greener streets.
- Two more PCC architects have achieved their Passivhaus accreditation since March 2022.
- In August, we joined several international climate change initiatives. Since joining, we have received international recognition regarding the sea defence work and our climate work.
- This year, we have successfully secured funding via the Queen's Green Canopy Commemorative planting initiative and the Urban Tree Challenge which will allow us to enable further planting across the city with a focus on schools and areas needing greenery.

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- PCC successfully applied for Defra's [Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund](#), gaining funding to support two new greening officers for two years.
- The Greening in the City Fund opened to the community and in this first round, £20,000 was allocated. The second round will open in April 2023.
- A year-long campaign called 'Greener Me in 23' began in January 2023. Its aims are to try to change resident's behaviour and choices towards more sustainable choices.
- Work has been ongoing with green groups across the city to listen to ideas and support planting days. This includes working with groups such as Friends of the Earth and the Charles Dickens Community Orchard. Several planting days have occurred across many wards of the city on council owned land, school land and private land. Many people have come forward to help plant thousands of whips and help to increase tree canopy cover, biodiversity, and promote community ownership. More planting days will occur in the next planting season and suggestions are always welcome.
- PCC has acted as pilot for the [Greenprint](#) framework for green recovery. This is a product developed by the Partnership for South Hampshire.
- Work has begun with schools to increase their green spaces and to 'green the grey' wherever possible.
- A new parks and open spaces strategy has been updated and accepted by Cabinet in February 2023.
- Collaborative work has happened alongside the Hive who kindly co-hosted with us an environmental networking event in 2022 with officers and green groups across the city attending. This was to open discussions, look at future projects, offer help and advice and, to see if any groups were interested in getting support for outside funding. It proved to be successful, and a second event happened this year.
- Renewable energy investment continues to happen not just on council buildings but is also being offered to residential properties via the Switched On Portsmouth service. We are now recognised as being the council with the largest number of solar panels in the country and we continue to win large amounts of funding from the government in regard to LAD and HUG funding. This means that we can provide even more homes and businesses with options regarding carbon savings, financial savings and income to the council whilst doing what we can to hit our net zero target in 2030 as a city.
- A Green Charter was created, and a number of large local organisations attended an event in 2022 to sign up to pledge to work with the council and each other to share strategies, work towards a common goal in regard to climate issues and work more collaboratively with each other. It was well attended and since then, more people have approached the council to ask to sign the charter. Going forward, we will meet to share work and strategize.

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This is just a small snapshot of several projects that have been going on in the last year with an idea as to what we will be aiming for in the up-and-coming year. I continue to work with all departments in the council. Nature and the environment need to be considered in all areas of the council as we move forwards with any plans and projects that we may have coming up and it has been great to work not just across multiple departments but to also work with members of the public, large scale businesses, SME's and local groups to try to make this city a better, healthier and greener place to live and work in. This year has been very exciting, but the following year looks to be even better. I cannot wait to work further on these existing projects, on future ones coming forward and to continue with this work.

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Signed by (Director)

Appendices:

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