

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL

15 DECEMBER 2022

Report Title	Member Champion Protocol			
Purpose of Report	To consider the adoption of the Member Champion Protocol including role descriptions and proposals for two new Member Champions.			
Decision(s)	<p>The Council RESOLVES:</p> <p>a) That the protocol attached at Appendix A be added to the Councils Constitution and adopted as a framework within which the Member Champions shall operate;</p> <p>b) To approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Migrant Champion roles;</p> <p>c) To appoint Councillors nominated in section 2 of the report to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Migrant Champion roles; and</p> <p>d) That the appointment of Member Champions be made at the Council Annual Meeting and that this item be included in the business for Annual Council shown in Council procedure rule 2.1.1.</p>			
Consultation and Feedback	Consultation has been held with the Constitution Working Group, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, Member Development Working Group, appointed Member Champions, Group Leaders and all Councillors, Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), Lead Officers and the Strategic Leadership Team.			
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Options	An alternative option is not to adopt the Member Champion Framework. This is not recommended as it does not support the decision taken at the July 2022 Council meeting where Members approved the recommendations of the IRP which included establishing a framework for Member Champions.			
Background Papers	Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel July 2022			
Appendices	Appendix A – Member Champion Framework and Role Descriptions Appendix B – Equality Analysis Form			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	Yes	No

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Although there is no legislative requirement for local authorities to appoint Member Champions, a number of Local authorities have recognised the value in having named

Elected Members acting as Champions for certain services, themes of communities or place of interest. Member Champions are elected Members who are appointed to specialise in important areas of work and drive issues forward as champions of specific areas of interest.

- 1.2 A report from the Independent Remuneration Panel was approved by Council on 21 July 2022. The report included a recommendation to establish a clear structural and constitutional framework within which Member Champions could operate, in order to maximise their effectiveness.
- 1.3 The Council currently have two Member Champion Roles which have previously been agreed by Council. These roles do not have an identified structure to work within and therefore the remit of the Champions and their position in the Council structure has been uncertain and at times lacked focus.
- 1.4 The current Member Champion Roles are included in the table below:

Champion Role	Date Champion Role was approved	Councillors	Date of Appointment	Summary of role
Mental Health Champion	Motion to Council proposed by Councillor Skinner and seconded by Councillor Davies – Agreed 26 April 2018	Cllr Bennett Cllr Gray Cllr Watson	19 May 2022	Aim of enhancing the mental health of local communities by promoting well-being, signposting to appropriate help and support and advocating for the consideration of mental health in council policy.
Armed Forces Champion	Agreed by Council 18 July 2019	Cllr Robinson Cllr Patrick	21 July 2022	To work with and support the Strategic Director of Communities delivering the military covenant helping to support the needs of service veterans in the Stroud District.

- 1.5 Member Champions will act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council's business and encourage communication and positive action over the issues they represent.

2. ADDITIONAL MEMBER CHAMPION ROLES

- 2.1 The following Champion roles have been developed following requests made to the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group and the draft role profiles can be found at Appendix A:

Champion Role	Role Profile	Nominated Councillors
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion	To support the Council to meet the equality objectives set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and help to embed equality in organisational activities.	Cllrs Bennett, Brown, Drury-Layfield, Kay, Oxley. Note: a requirement of this role is to sit on the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.
Migrant Champion	To champion the rights of migrants, advocate for migrants' rights, and be a point of contact for migrant residents and organisations supporting migrants ensuring their needs are considered and voices heard.	Councillor Cornell.

3 MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 It is important that the Council has in place robust arrangements to ensure that Member Champion roles are recognised, given credibility and that there is some capacity provided to support member champions.
- 3.2 The protocol attached as appendix A sets out a recommended framework within which member champions might work effectively. This will ensure that champions, other members, officers and community interest groups understand the role and its parameters and where the Champion fits into the councils structure and leadership arrangements.
- 3.3 The protocol includes a general role profile for champions as well as a role profile for each specific champion role. Member champions will:
 - Make sure that their area of interest is considered when developing policy or making decisions.
 - Raise the profile of the interest and promote best practice.
 - Engage with external bodies who work in the area and support community engagement activities.
 - Engage with other members, officers and community groups who have an interest/stake in the area.
 - Engage with community groups with an interest/stake in the area.
 - Report to their Committee, full Council or other committees (as necessary and requested) setting out the actions taken and how those actions have contributed to the success and promotion of that area of interest.
- 3.4 To assist in providing structured support and to assist Champions with their responsibilities, each Member Champion area will be designated a named officer support. It is important that the champions and officers work together to agree roles and actions for the area being championed to avoid any potential duplication or overlap of work.
- 3.5 Member champions will work in partnership with Committee Chairs and liaise with external organisations, including partner bodies. They do not have authority to commit the council.
- 3.6 The benefits associated with appointing Member Champions include:
 - Involving a greater number of Councillors in the work of the Council.
 - Providing support and focus for an aspect of the councils services, priorities or aims.

- Emphasising and promoting social inclusion (for example, disability, equalities or homelessness are common interests that are championed).
- Engaging Councillors in specific and general aspects of community leadership.

4. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER CHAMPIONS

- 4.1 The appointment of Member Champions will be made at full Council.
- 4.2 To allow for consistency and stability in the role, the Protocol sets out that the term of a Champion should be for a minimum of two years, although there will be opportunity to review positions at each Annual Meeting.
- 4.3 Due to the next district council elections being held in 2024, it is recommended that all Member Champion appointments are appointed until this date at which time, the Member Champion Roles will be re-appointed to at the Council's Annual Meeting for the years 2024 – 2026.
- 4.4 Each political group will be made aware of proposals to appoint Member Champions and given the opportunity to submit nominations. There is no legal requirement to apply the political balance rules to the appointment so they should be made based on skills, knowledge and suitability for the role.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation with Members and various working groups on the protocol provided valuable feedback and resulted in several changes:
- 5.2 The development of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion resulted from a request from the Staff Pride Network (STRIDE) endorsed by the Council's Equality Diversity & Inclusion Working Group.
- 5.3 Group Leaders requested clarity on the appointment of Member Champions and for this to be made a Full Council. They queried the name of the Migrant Champion due to the word 'Migrant' having a negative portrayal however, due to the important link this champion will have with the Migrant Champions network it was agreed this name was appropriate. It was also requested there be a method of measuring the effectiveness of Champions and the requirement to submit an annual report to the relevant committee was added to the Framework.
- 5.4 The Member Development Working Group requested that the relationship between the Champion and a parent committee is strengthened. As a result, each Champion role profile sets out the identified parent committee for the Champion roles including reporting to committee and appropriate consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair; the work programme should allow for Champions to add activity in response to local national events.
- 5.5 A number of responses to the consultation highlighted the need for Champions to receive media training and be consulted along with the relevant Chair and Vice Chair in relation to including a quote in the council's press releases.
- 5.6 The Constitution Working Group discussed the Member Champion Protocol at their meeting in November and considered the necessity of the framework, the Members concluded that they had no additional recommendations or additions to the Protocol.

5.7 The Independent Remuneration Panel welcomes the initiative to produce this guidance, which will help the Council and others to see the Member Champion role in context. They look forward to monitoring how the Member Champion role evolves in Stroud with this clear framework in place.”

5.8 All Lead Officers identified in the Champion Role Profiles have been consulted with and agree to the role they play in supporting Member Champions.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The Constitution currently makes no reference to Member Champions, the protocol is therefore recommended for approval in order to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Member Champions. If the Member Champion Framework is approved, it will form part of the Council’s Constitution and be periodically reviewed by the Council’s Constitution Working Group. As part of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel it is also recommended that the Panel review the duties, time and effort of the Champions once the framework has been established.

7. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this decision. Any training requirements for members will be considered as part of existing budgets. Any future recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel having review the role of the Champions will be the subject of a separate Council decision.

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4.2 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from the report recommendations.

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4.3 Equality Implications

The Member Champion Protocol demonstrates the Council’s commitment to equality and diversity. The current Mental Health Champion and Armed Forces Champion roles and the recommended Migrant Champion and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion roles will promote social inclusion and equalities. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Member Champion roles will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics by assisting the Council to meet the equality objectives set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

An Equality Analysis Form has been completed and can be found at Appendix B.

4.4 Environmental Implications

There are no direct environment implications arising as a result of adopting a Member Champion Protocol.