



Stroud District Council

Member Champion

Protocol

This Member Champion Protocol was developed following a recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel approved at full Council on the 21 July 2022. This section provides a summary of the role and function of Member Champions and includes the detailed role profiles for specific Member Champion roles.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Member Champions are elected Members who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council's business or a particular interest within the community, they have evolved in the Council as a result of national initiatives and approval at Council. The primary responsibility of each Member Champion is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent.

2. Appointment of Member Champions

- 2.1. Appointment of the Member Champions will be made at Full Council meetings. A proposal for a new Member Champion role may be made by a motion to Council or a recommendation from a Committee. It is recommended that Group Leaders should be consulted and advice from the Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive sought prior to the submission of any motions.
- 2.2. The Council, at its annual meeting will appoint Member Champions. Although the Council will be entitled to make changes at its annual meeting, a Champion is expected to serve for a minimum period of two years to ensure some stability in the role.
- 2.3. Member Champion roles are not subject to political proportionality rules and therefore the appointments should be made based on skills, knowledge, suitability for the role and relevant national and local guidance. Each political group will be made aware of proposals to appoint Member Champions and given the opportunity to submit nominations.
- 2.4. A Member Champion may resign from office by giving written notice to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer. The position will remain vacant until the appointment is made at the next Council meeting.

3. Role of Member Champions

- 3.1. All Member Champions will have a role profile which will set out their respective duties and responsibilities. These responsibilities are in addition to those listed in the [Councillor Role Profile in Section 16](#).
- 3.2. The Champion role profiles will be developed by the Lead Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Parent Committee or Working Group as well as the Champions themselves.
- 3.3. A generic role description is set out in Appendix A to this protocol.

4. Parameters of Member Champion Role

- 4.1. The above role is set in the context of a specific interest or theme. The following parameters apply to the role:
 - a) All Champions must act reasonably in the role.
 - b) All Champions must recognise and work effectively within the political management and working arrangements agreed by the Council.
- 4.2. A Member Champion:
 - a) Is effectively given authority by the Stroud District Council (appointing committee) to take all reasonable actions judged by the Member as being necessary to perform the role of Champion.

- b) Cannot commit the Council in any way that is contrary to established policy and practice but may confirm a Council position as stated in published policy.
- c) Cannot make decisions that bind the Council and must have regard to any budget implications which may arise.
- d) Must adhere to the Press and Media protocol and liaise with the Communications team on all forms of contact with the press and media including if they have been approached by the media for comment.
- e) Is entitled to have access to the information held by the Council relating to the interest being championed and access to a reasonable amount of Officer time. to discuss that information but may not commit officer time to such an extent that other priority work required of Officers is prejudiced.
- f) Should agree with the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Parent Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs, a programme of activity for a Council year. The work programme must reflect the Council's overall priorities as set out in the Council Plan, but the Champion may include such aspects as seen to them to be relevant for attention, as long as overall priorities are not directly prejudiced by those aspects. The work programme will be a 'live' document and can be updated throughout the year.

5. Support put in place by the Council

5.1. Taking all the above into account the Council will:

- a) Take steps to promote understanding within the Council of the role of a Member Champion and describe how it relates to other Member level functions.
- b) Promote similar understanding among its working partners, external bodies and the local community.
- c) Arrange to designate a Lead Officer to support each appointed Champion.
- d) Ensure that the Lead Officer, relating to each Championed interest, are aware of the champion roles that affect them and the rights of Champions to access / discuss information about the service.
- e) Require each Champion to report annually to the Council / Parent Committee on the performance of the function and on issues arising.
- f) Invite the Member Champion to act as its representative on some or all of the relevant external bodies where Council representation is required or sought. If representation is already in place then to work closely with the appointed Member.
- g) Put in place appropriate skills development for Champions within the overall Member development strategy of the Council.
- h) Keep under review the relevance of the role of Member Champions in the context of the Council's Members' Scheme of Allowances and if appropriate, make a request for the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel to consider this.
- i) When appointing Champions, set down any additional protocol requirements not covered by this version as part of the specific role profile.

6. Internal Working relationships

6.1. Committee Chairs and Councillors will:

- a) Acknowledge the right of Champions to be consulted on matters relating to their interest.
- b) Ensure where appropriate that there is engagement or consultation with Champions in the formulation of a policy or other matters and that the views of the Champions are contained in the information provided to decision makers.
- c) Consider inviting the relevant Champion to represent the Council at any relevant conference / seminar on the subject matter of the interest on the basis that the Champion will report back to the Council or Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs.
- d) Take full account of any views offered by Champions prior to any decision making on matters that clearly relate to the interest being championed.
- e) Acknowledge and facilitate the right of Member Champions to attend Committees of which they are not a member in order to observe or to make representations.
- f) Attend relevant meetings where invited by the Champion(s) in order to receive updates and offer support.

6.2. Officers will:

- a) Acknowledge the right of Champions to be consulted and to participate in discussions on matters relating to their interest.
- b) Ensure there is appropriate engagement or consultation with all relevant Champions where the issue clearly relates to the interest, every effort should be made to include all of the Member Champions regarding interests which are championed by multiple Members.
- c) Co-operate fully with Champions in enabling them to perform their functions and to discuss directly with Champions and Members where proposed actions might prejudice Council or other priorities.
- d) Explain fully and openly to Champions any issues of capacity relating to the role of supporting the Champion function.
- e) Work with Champions in the formulation of a programme of activity that is consistent with what the Council wishes to achieve and recognises the right of the Champion to focus on other aspects.
- f) The Communications Team will contact the relevant Member Champions on matters relating to the interest and will endeavour to include a quote from one Member Champion on any matters relating to the interest being championed.

7. External working relationships

7.1. The Champion will:

- a) Consider being the Council's representative on certain relevant external bodies.
- b) Monitor and work closely with partner bodies in the field of the interest being championed.
- c) Identify the most relevant community bodies whose work is associated with the interest and foster good working relationships with those groups.

- d) Take steps to promote within the wider community the specific issues on which the Champion is to focus and to provide opportunities for local engagement.

8. Conflict resolution

- 8.1. In the event that there is disagreement between the Champion and either an Officer or a Member, the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council shall determine the matter. The decision of the Chief Executive shall be final.
- 8.2. If the disagreement is between the Champion and the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, shall determine the matter.

Appendix A - Member Champion General Role Profile

1. Background

- 1.1. Member Champions are elected members who in addition to their other council responsibilities help to ensure that the issue or group that they are championing is taken into account when council policy is being developed and decisions are made.
- 1.2. Member Champions exist to provide a voice for underrepresented groups, or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of council business.
- 1.3. The Member Champion role does not have personal delegated power to act on the council's behalf on matters relating to the interest being championed. Member Champions must work within the council's Constitution.
- 1.4. The Member Champion/s will represent the whole District with regards to their championed interest and will not be confined to just the ward they represent as a District Councillor.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

2.1. Member Champions will:

- a) Champion the adopted policy of the Council for the relevant interest and to contribute to the review and development of policies pertaining to the area of interest.
- b) Promote their area of interest and act as a catalyst for change and improvement both within and outside of the Council, having regard to the Council's overall corporate and service priorities and Council Plan.
- c) Keep up to date with all relevant matters connected with the interest including networking with other Member Champions both from within the organisation and from other local authorities with the same or similar interests.
- d) Ensure good practice within the authority relating to the interest is shared and that examples of good practice elsewhere are brought to the attention of Members and Officers.
- e) Present an annual report to the Council or the Parent Committee.
- f) Monitor the Stroud Council Plan and work with Lead Officers and Members proactively to advise, identify, challenge and to exert influence on behalf of the interest.
- g) Ensure that all Members of the Council and the Council's Officers are aware of the needs, issues and support available relating to the interest.
- h) Take advice from the appointed Lead Officer.
- i) Seek to engage with senior management by offering to attend meetings in order to deliver presentations, ask questions or raise issues for consideration.
- j) Serve where appropriate on working groups relating to their area of interest and seek to place appropriate items on Member Working Group agendas.
- k) Work closely with Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Parent Committee to keep them up to date with progress and ask for support where necessary.

- l) In all of the above, recognise the limited capacity of Officers to support the Champion role alongside the demands of all other Member and Council Functions and will, therefore make reasonable allowance for this.

3. Skills

- 3.1. Member Champions will pursue such personal development and training opportunities to enable effective performance in the role of a member champion and raise personal awareness of issues relevant to the interest being championed.
- 3.2. Member Champions must be Self-motivated and able to manage their own workload whilst working closely with the Lead Officer and any relevant Chairs and Vice -Chairs.

4. Time Commitment

- 4.1. Member Champions will present an annual report to the Council or the Parent Committee on the work achieved during the previous reporting period and priorities identified for the future.
- 4.2. They will work with a nominated Lead Officer in prioritising actions as a Member Champion, creating a work plan that achieves a balance between helping to achieve corporate priorities and delivering other priorities identified by the Member Champion.

Appendix B - Mental Health Champion Role Profile

1. Background

- 1.1. The Local Authority Mental Health Challenge was setup by a group of leading mental health charities. At a full Council meeting on the 26th April 2018, Stroud District Council approved a Motion to sign up and appoint Mental Health Champions.
- 1.2. The challenge specified the need for nominated elected members to become mental health champions, and while the exact remit is defined locally and developed by the champions themselves. Key objectives include:
 - a) Promotion of well-being, resilience and positive mental health with SDC Officers, Members and Residents.
 - b) Signpost to existing services for more specialist things and seek ways to fill gaps as they are identified, aware that most provision falls outside the council's remit and crosses NHS, community and private service provision. Keen to embed consideration of mental health in all council decision making, alongside diversity and equality as a whole
 - c) Advocate consideration of mental health alongside equality, diversity, and physical requirements in council policy.
 - d) To build wellbeing and mental health support into all community hubs as they emerge

2. Requirements for the role:

- 2.1. An enthusiasm for, and interest in wellbeing, improving the working environment and supporting engagement.
- 2.2. Being approachable and willing to help.
- 2.3. A basic understanding of healthy lifestyles and health promotion.
- 2.4. Keen to keep up to date with activities and attend training events / relevant meetings.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Mental Health Champions will:
 - a) Fulfil the requirements of the general Member Champion Role profile as seen in Appendix A in addition to the specified requirements for the championed interest.
 - b) Advocate for mental health awareness, wellbeing and beneficial intervention opportunities in council/committee meetings and policy development.
 - c) Reach out to the local community (e.g. via schools, businesses, faith groups) to raise awareness and challenge stigma.
 - d) Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health.
 - e) Provide information about and encourage others to participate in health and wellbeing initiatives/challenges
 - f) Foster local partnerships between agencies to support people with mental health problems more effectively.

- g) Engage with people through your role in the community and by attending local groups and events.
- h) Encourage the council to support the mental health of its own workforce, contractors and Members.

4. Supporting Officer

- 4.1. The Lead Officer(s) will be Head of Community Services, and Head of Human Resources.

5. Parent Committee(s)

- 5.1. The Parent Committee for Mental Health Champions will be Community Services and Licensing Committee

Appendix C - Armed Forces Champion Role Profile

1. Background

- 1.1. The Armed Forces Covenant outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the government and the armed forces is a commitment by a local authority, statutory services, military charities, and the private sector to support members of their local armed forces community. It is a pledge that acknowledges those who serve, or who have served, in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives.
- 1.2. At a full Council meeting on the 18th July 2019, Stroud District Council agreed to appoint two Armed Forces Member Champions to support the Armed Forces Covenant. An amendment to this decision recognised that the role should continue to be a civic duty and therefore either the Chair or Vice-Chair of Council should always hold at least one of these positions.

2. Requirements for the role:

- 2.1. At least one Armed Forces Champion must either be the Chair or Vice-Chair of Council.
- 2.2. An enthusiasm for, and interest in encouraging local communities to support the armed forces community in their area.
- 2.3. Being approachable and willing to help.
- 2.4. Some Armed Forces experience would be an advantage, though not required.
- 2.5. Keen to keep up to date with activities and attend the occasional training event / meeting.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Armed Forces Champions will:
 - a) Raise the profile and needs of the Armed Forces community (serving personnel, both regular and reserve, their families and veterans), within the Council and the wider county.
 - b) Keep up to date on activities being undertaken locally to support service personnel and their families.
 - c) Have up to date knowledge on any Armed Forces issues and be able to provide information on local activities.
 - d) Attend events on behalf of the Chair relating to the Armed Forces.
 - e) Raise the profile of the Armed Forces and ex-Service personnel and promote local events.
 - f) Develop and encourage local businesses to support the Covenant.

4. Supporting Officer

- 4.1. The Lead Officer will be the Strategic Director of Communities.

5. Parent Committee(s)

- 5.1. The Parent Committee for Armed Forces Champions will be Council.

Appendix D - Migrant Champion Role Profile

1. Background

- 1.1. The Migrant Champions Network is a new project that will support local councillors to champion the rights of migrants in their local areas and beyond. The network will support councillors to advocate for migrants' rights, help them to connect with local services and advice centres, and ensure their needs are considered and voices heard. This role will work closely with the migrant Network.

2. Requirements for the role:

- 2.1. An enthusiasm for, and interest in wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion and promoting the rights of migrants.
- 2.2. Being approachable and willing to help.
- 2.3. Keen to keep up to date with activities and attend the occasional training or network events and meetings.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Migrant Champions will work with Stroud District Council and where appropriate, Gloucestershire County Council to:
 - a) Be a point of contact for migrant residents, and organisations supporting migrants;
 - b) Review policies and procedures to ensure migrants have adequate access to services;
 - c) promote council resolutions to promote migrants' rights;
 - d) take up cases across the authority that involve migrants' rights;
 - e) ensure that the needs of vulnerable migrants, especially children, are met by council services; and
 - f) ensure that all migrants entitled to vote are asked to register and helped if they need it, and that the information provided by relevant officers is accurate and appropriate.

4. Supporting Officer

- 4.1. The Lead Officers will be the Interim Head of Strategic Housing Services and the International Resettlement Officer.

5. Parent Committee(s)

- 5.1. The Parent Committee for Migrant Champions will be Council

Appendix E – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions

1. Background

- 1.1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions will play a central role in assisting the Council to meet the equality objectives set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. They will monitor delivery of the associated 1-year Action Plan and report progress annually to Full Council.

2. Requirements for the role:

- 2.1. The Equality, diversity, and inclusivity champion should have:
 - a) Excellent communication skills
 - b) The ability to be objective
 - c) A sensitive and professional manner
 - d) Understanding of, or willingness to learn about, equality and diversity matters
 - e) Strong relationships with team members across a variety of roles and positions
 - f) A willingness to engage openly and honestly with others on topics that can at times be challenging and difficult to discuss
 - g) An enthusiasm for, and interest in wellbeing, improving the working environment and supporting engagement.
- 2.2. The appointed ED&I Champions must sit on the Council's Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Working Group.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Ensure that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is consistently measured and appraised with progress against the current objectives kept under review.
- 3.2. Understand the communities that make up the Stroud District and work with them on a range of issues.
- 3.3. Develop the roles of elected members in driving equalities forward.
- 3.4. Champion the equality and diversity agenda and embed equality in organisational activities.
- 3.5. Use the expertise within the group to find practical solutions to any barriers that may present themselves in delivering the Council's aspirations and obligations around equality and diversity.
- 3.6. Share and exchange knowledge and information about how the different communities of the Stroud district experience service delivery.
- 3.7. Establish mechanisms for on-going dialogue and joined up working between teams to share good practice and ensure consistency across the organisation.
- 3.8. Identify areas in which the organisation can improve its efforts to be more inclusive and recommend actions.

4. Supporting Officer

4.1. The Lead Officers will be the Policy & Performance Officer, and the Senior Operations Partner (HR).

5. Parent Committee(s)

5.1. The Parent Committee for ED&I Champions will be Council