

Review of Member Champions

SUMMARY

- 1.1 In response to a question raised at Full Council, the role of Member Champions has been reviewed and proposals to revise and strengthen the role have been developed. These include a role description and a person specification
- 1.2 The review of Member Champions was carried out by a working group comprising current Member Champions, supported by officers. Consultation has also been carried out with the Leaders of all Political Groups, the Council's Diversity Forums, Derby 50+ Forum, Voices in Action and the Derby Older People's Strategic Planning Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To adopt the proposed governance arrangements for Member Champions.
- 2.2 To adopt the proposed person specification and job descriptions for Member Champions.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To improve the effectiveness of the work of Member Champions.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Current Governance Arrangements

- 4.1 The current governance arrangements for Member Champions (MCs) are as follows...
- MCs are selected at the Annual Council Meeting in May for a period of twelve months.
 - The Council currently has MCs for the following areas:
 - disabled people
 - minority communities
 - older people
 - children and young people
 - gender and sexuality
 - play
 - cycling
 - heritage.
 - The Member Champion (MC) for disabled people, minority communities and gender and sexuality Chair the respective diversity forums.

Proposals to improve governance and operational support for Member Champions

- 4.2 To improve the effectiveness of MCs, governance and operational arrangements must be strengthened across a number of areas.

Communities/ Policy Areas to be Championed

- 4.3 The Council currently has MCs for both communities and policy areas. In addition, members are asked to champion other initiatives in the Council. It is proposed that the Council has MCs for communities of interest only and the role should be adapted depending upon the community. The Council should therefore have MCs for...
- disabled people
 - minority communities
 - older people
 - children and young people
 - gender and sexuality

In this role MCs will be expected to Chair and/or participate in related Council forums and will require different types of support, including how to engage with communities or groups, raising awareness of different activities and events, or providing different types of specialist advice on policy and legislative changes and requirements.

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities

- 4.4 Currently the MC role is not clearly defined, which can create confusion amongst MCs, officers and communities of interest about the role and how it should be fulfilled. It also leads to the role being carried out differently and inconsistently by different MCs. It is proposed that the role description and person specification set out in Appendix B should be adopted.

Member Champion Selection

- 4.5 Currently there are no restrictions on the appointment of MCs, meaning that any Member, regardless of their committee membership can be assigned to the role and a Member can hold two MC roles. However, over time a number of issues have arisen in relation to this including whether:
- there is a conflict of interest if MCs are Cabinet members
 - Members have the time to fulfil effectively two MC roles
 - MCs should be the Leader of the Council or drawn from the executive to demonstrate commitment
 - MCs should be non-executive Councillors because they have more time to devote to the role.

To overcome these issues it is proposed that MCs should be non-executive Members.

Length of Appointment

- 4.6 MCs are appointed for 12 months. Although they can be reappointed, this means that...
- MCs spend a large proportion of their time in the role developing their understanding of the community/policy area and building a relationship with relevant communities and officer.
 - MCs do not understand fully the issues and priorities for communities/policy areas and the practicalities of responding to these until they have been in the role for some time. At this point, the time available to make a positive impact is limited.
 - Knowledge and experience is lost every twelve months.
 - The Council's investment in developing the MC, comprising of officer time and costs associated with member development is lost on annual basis.

It is therefore proposed that MCs are appointed for a minimum of four years, or until their term expires.

Support for Member Champions

4.7 To be effective, MCs need support to understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities and specialist development in relation to the communities they are championing.

4.8 It is therefore proposed that:

- the MC system will be co-ordinated by the Policy, Research and Engagement Division to ensure MCs receive the support they need and are fulfilling their role
- Member Champions will meet twice a year to review the role and share learning
- support for MCs will be provided by a named officer in the relevant department. This officer will also work with the MCs to identify any development needs and identify suitable learning and development opportunities to meet these. The officer will also be responsible for keeping the MC up to date on latest developments in the community and any professional support that is available to them.

The costs of professional development will be met by the Member Development budget.

Reporting

4.9 It is proposed that a MC report, comprising a brief statement of activity and achievement from each MC should be prepared and presented by the Leader of Council at the Annual Council Meeting in May. The preparation of the statement should be supported by the officer nominated to support the respective MC.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Director of Legal and Democratic Services Director of Finance and Procurement Head of Policy, Research and Engagement
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For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Name Mahroof Hussain 01332 643647 e-mail mahroof.hussain@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 - Implications Appendix 2 - Member Champion Role Description and Person Specification
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 Any Member Development Costs are contained within the member Development Budget

Legal

- 2.1 None arising directly form the report.

Personnel

- 3.1 Support for Member Champions is already provided by relevant officers. The new arrangements would simply provide greater clarity on roles and responsibilities.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 The proposed governance arrangements, job description and person specification will improve the effectiveness of Member Champions to represent the interests of communities of interest more effectively.

Health and Safety

- 5.1 None arising directly form the report.

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 None arising directly form the report.

Asset Management

- 7.1 None arising directly form the report.

Risk Management

- 8.1 None arising directly form the report.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 The proposals set out will ensure that communities represented will benefit from the achievement of all corporate objectives and enable the Council to provide good

quality services that meet local needs.