

## APPENDIX C – Member Champions – A Model Protocol

1. Member Champions have evolved as a result of:
  - (a) national initiatives in connection with the development of services or as a result of new legislation, eg Children
  - (b) initiatives taken in wishing to focus Member activity on certain aspects of the Council's business and functions.
2. A Champion is an Elected Member appointed by the Council to provide a focus on a specific area of the Council's business or a community\*\* need to ensure it is given due regard in relation to the activities of the Council and of its partners in local governance.

\*\* *in this context, a community can be a place, culture, religion, faith or interest*

3. A Member Champion can be an Executive Member, Leader or Cabinet Member or, more commonly, a Non-Executive Member.
4. The Council at its annual meeting will identify interests to be championed and will appoint named Councillors to champion one specific interest. 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.
5. Within the context of the interest being Championed, and as part of their overall and individual community leadership responsibilities:
  - a Champion will be expected to exert influence on those within the Council who make executive decisions and on other Members of the Council in the context of full Council, regulatory and overview and scrutiny functions
  - a Champion will be expected to exert influence on relevant external partners and bodies in their decision making and planning
  - a Champion will act as a catalyst for change and improvement
  - a Champion will work with others within the Council to maintain efficient, effective and relevant services and policies
6. By appointing a Member as a Champion, the Council is empowering that Member to act in that capacity. It follows, therefore, that the Council should put in place such arrangements as it things appropriate to support the Champion in that capacity.
7. The above role is set in the context of the specific interest or theme. The following parameters apply to the role.
8. All Champions must act reasonably in the role.
9. All Champions must recognise and work effectively within the political management and executive working arrangements agreed by the Council.

10. A Champion who is NOT an executive Mayor/Member:

- is effectively given authority by the Council to take all reasonable actions judged by the Member as being necessary to perform the role of Champion
- 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
- cannot make decisions that bind the Council
- is entitled to have access to information held by the Council's officers 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)

### **WHAT THE COUNCIL WILL PUT IN PLACE TO SUPPORT CHAMPIONS**

11. Taking all the above into account, the Council will:

- take steps to promote understanding within the Council of the role of a Member Champion as they wish it to be and how it relates to other Member functions
- promote similar understanding among its working partners, external bodies and the local community
- ensure that the professional lead officer(s) relating to each championed interest are aware of the Champion roles that affect them and the rights of the Champions to access/discuss information about the service

### **INTERNAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS**

12. The Champion will:

- liaise regularly with (other) executive Members whose portfolios are relevant to the role (for some generic interests this will be all or many of them)
- Monitor the Executive Forward Plan and seek information from the relevant officers and executive Members about forthcoming business and exert influence on behalf of the interest
- monitor Policy Development Group and Scrutiny work plans and activity and seek information and offer views on relevant review subjects and exert influence on behalf of the interest
- serve where appropriate on corporate working groups relating to their area of responsibility
- take advice from the appointed lead functional officer and the relevant lead professional officer(s)
- seek to place appropriate items on Member meeting agendas

- keep other Councillors up-to-date with activities within the interest
- in all 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
- generally promote the interest

13. Executive chairs will:

- acknowledge the right of Champions to be consulted on matters relating to their interest
- ensure there is appropriate engagement or consultation with Champions in the formulation of policy and other executive matters and that any views are contained in the information provided to decision makers
- take full account of any views offered by Champions prior to any executive decision making on matters within the interest, and demonstrate this within the record of the decision
- cooperate with Champions in the formulation and delivery of their action plan they have agreed with their lead officer where this will not prejudice executive priorities

14. Policy Development Group and Scrutiny lead Members will:

- acknowledge the right of Champions to be consulted and to participate in discussions on matters relating to their interest
- ensure there is appropriate engagement or consultation with Champions in the formulation of policy and in service review activity
- ensure Champions are specifically invited to be contributors to any reviews that have a direct bearing on the interest (recognising the right of a Champion to attend as an observer at any such session)

15. Officers will:

- acknowledge the right of Champions to be consulted and to participate in discussion on matters relating to their interest
- ensure there is appropriate engagement or consultation with relevant Champions where the issue clearly relates to the interest
- cooperate fully with Champions in enabling them to perform their functions and to discuss directly with Champions and executive/lead Members where proposed actions might prejudice Council or other priorities
- explain fully and openly to Champions any issues of capacity relating to the role of supporting the Champion function

## EXTERNAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

16. The Champions will:

- need to acknowledge that there is no statutory authority for the Member Champion role
- need to recognise that the Council does have some legal powers with regard to the scrutiny of external bodies and other working relationships with outside bodies arising from legal provisions
- monitor and work closely with partner bodies in the field of the interest being championed
- communicate on behalf of the 'interest' group and the Council to outside bodies
- (may) be the Council's representative on certain relevant external bodies
- identify the most relevant community bodies whose work is associated with the interest and foster good working relationships with those groups
- take to promote within the wider community the specific issues on which the Champion is to focus and to provide opportunities for local engagement – involving Executive and overview and Scrutiny lead Members as appropriate.