

# CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

Demoratic Services Committee 5 July 2021

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Head of Democratic Services

**SUBJECT:** Member Champions Review

---

**REPORT FOR:** Discussion

---

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Democratic Services Committee reviewed the role of Member Champions (MCs) at its meeting in March 2020 [[Member Champion Review March 2020](#)]. The Committee noted that Member Champions could have an important role to play in the work of the Council. However, the need for champions, the promotion and appointments process and the support and governance arrangements needed to be developed.
- 1.2 The Committee resolved “that governance arrangements to support Member Champions be developed and reported back to the Committee by the end of the calendar year at the latest.” However, due to Covid19 and the Council concentrating on business critical work the Committee did not meet.

## 2. Member Champions – roles, responsibilities, support and governance

- 2.1 Officers however, developed the draft Member Champions – roles, responsibilities, support and governance document and emailed this to Committee members for comment in June 2020 and again in April 2021 [Appendix 1].
- 2.2 Some issues are highlighted in yellow, which the DSC will need to consider.
- 2.3 The following comments have been received:
  - When a new MC role has been established, the information regarding this role will be circulated to all Councillors and expressions of interest will be sought for a Councillor to fill the role. If more than one Councillor expresses an interest, the Leader will consider those interested and
  - The Leader will appoint a Councillor and report on the appointment to Council.

- 2.4 The Committee is asked to consider the draft document and make recommendations to Council.
- 2.5 The Committee may wish to consider asking current Member Champions to use the reporting template, to ensure the work and achievements of MCs during this current Council term is not lost and are available for the new Council term commencing in May 2022. In addition, the MCs would be asked to comment on the ease of using the template, so that any changes can be made prior to the new Council term.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Reason for Recommendation:</b>
<b>To review the draft Member Champions – roles, responsibilities, support and governance document and make recommendations to Council.</b>	<b>To review the appointment of Member Champions in the Council.</b>

Contact Officer:	Wyn Richards, Head of Democratic Services
Tel:	01597 826375
Email:	wyn.richards@powys.gov.uk

**DRAFT**

**Member Champions – roles, responsibilities, support and governance**

**Background**

Member Champions [MCs] provide a voice for issues which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business that may not be the responsibility of any individual or committee. Appendix xx gives details of MCs appointed in the past by the Council.

In addition to their other Council responsibilities, MCs make sure that the issue or group which they are championing are considered when Council policy is being developed and decisions are made.

The appointment of MCs is kept under review and can change over the period of a Council term. **Options for consideration by DSC:**

1. They are appointed by the Leader and appointments are notified to the next Council meeting after their appointment. OR
2. They are appointed by Council on the recommendations of the Leader.

Typically, MCs will:

- Ensure that their area of interest is considered when developing policy or making decisions
- Ask questions about performance and resourcing for the area
- Raise the profile of the area and make the authority aware of good practice
- Engage with other officers and members in relation to the role
- Engage with external bodies and community groups with an interest in the area to:
  - develop links between these and the Council,
  - raise the profile of issues in the Council and how these can be addressed in the Council when developing policies etc
  - provide advice and support to external bodies and community groups to develop responses to issues in the wider community
- Report on their work to the Council and the general public.

The following information has been produced to support a Member, who is appointed as a MC, in this role. As part of this process MCs are also asked to review these documents and processes to ensure they are fit for purpose.

**Role description and person specifications**

The Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA] has developed a generic role description and person specification for MCs – see Appendix xx.

When a specific MC role is being considered the generic role description and person specification will be reviewed and developed, as required, to reflect

the specific role being proposed. It will be important to identify any skills, knowledge or experience required by the champion to enable them to undertake the role. The individual[s] proposing the MC role should discuss the development of the role description and person specification with Democratic Services.

### **Development of a Member Champion role**

When the development of a MC role is being proposed the following should be considered and recorded on the relevant form [Appendix xx]:

- justification for the role
- identification of any specific issues in the county which the MC should address
- details of Portfolio Holder and officers within the Council with whom the MC should develop links and the name of their main contact officer, who would provide advice and support to the role
- details of external bodies, such as statutory bodies, third sector organisations and community organisations to which links need to be made
- the required outputs, during the year for the MC, which should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, as required
- clearly state the powers of the MC to act on behalf of the Council and whether the MC has powers to make decisions and whether the MC has any delegated budget for the role
- the support available to the MC including specific officers from appropriate service areas and from Democratic Services.

The above information is important as it explains the importance of the MC role in the Council and ensures that the Councillor appointed understands their role and feels valued from the outset.

### **Responsibilities of a Member Champion**

As with any role within the Council, when appointed as MC the Councillor must:

- observe the Members Code of Conduct
- act ethically as required by the Local Government Act 2000 and the Nolan Principles for Standards in Public Life
- treat people with respect and
- adhere to Cyber security and General Data Protection Regulations [GDPR].

In addition to the above a MC must:

- Undertake the MC role across the whole of Powys and not merely in their own local area
- Work within the powers provided to them as referred to above
- Maintain a regular link with the main contact officer and Portfolio Holder, as appropriate

- Produce an annual report to Council on the work undertaken, using the reporting template as provided in Appendix x
- Seek authorisation for attendance at any event, seminar or course funded by the Council.

### **Appointment of a Member Champion**

#### **Process for consideration by the DSC - options:**

- When a new MC role has been established, the Leader will approach Councillor[s] who they consider would be interested in the role and information regarding the role will be provided **OR**
- When a new MC role has been established, the information regarding this role will be circulated to all Councillors and expressions of interest will be sought for a Councillor to fill the role. If more than one Councillor expresses an interest, the Leader will consider those interested **OR** the Leader with the support of the Chair of Council, Portfolio Holder and Chair of Democratic Services Committee will consider each individual.

Whichever of the above is chosen there are then options on how this is reported to Council – options:

**The Leader will appoint a Councillor and report on the appointment to Council.**

**OR**

**The Leader will recommend the appointment of a Councillor to Council.**

It should be noted that appointments to MC roles are non-political appointments.

### **Reporting back on Member Champions' work**

It is important that governance arrangements are in place to ensure that the MC's work is reported to Council and that they feel valued and supported in their role. Each MC will produce an annual report, for Full Council, providing information on their work during the past year in respect of expected outcomes, other work and issues arisen during the year, links made with new third sector organisations and community organisations and whether the MC role should continue for a further year. The latter will follow discussions with the Leader, Portfolio Holder, and Democratic Services Chair and lead officer and will outline desired outcomes for the next year.

Democratic Services will circulate an annual report template six weeks before the report is due to be presented to Council. Using this template will make it easier for MCs to provide a straightforward account of their work and support consistency of reporting across each Champion role. If a MC does not return a report within the required timescale this will be reported to Council.

The draft template is provided as Appendix A.

### **Feedback from other sources – external reports**

Alongside reports from MCs, feedback will also be requested from external bodies and community groups that the Champion has engaged with during the year. The draft template is provided as Appendix B.

This information will not initially be put into the public domain, but it will be used by the Leader, Portfolio Holder, Chair of Democratic Services Committee and lead officer with the MC to assess the value of the role for future years. If intentions change and the information is to be shared with the public, then Member Champions will be advised in advance.

## Appendix A

The following will be formatted into a form once we've had comments on the content.

### Annual report – Member Champion

Member Champion for: **Title**

Champion: Councillor **Name**

Portfolio Holder & Portfolio: Councillor **Name, Portfolio title**

Lead Officer & title: **Lead Officer & title**

1. Briefly explain the connections you have made with the following, in respect of your role:

- Portfolio Holder
- Officers within Powys County Council
- Councillors

Provide details of the individuals you have engaged with and an account of the type of engagement. If you have not engaged with any of the above, please explain why you have not done so.

2. Briefly explain the connections you have made with external bodies, such as statutory bodies, third sector organisations and community organisations in respect of your role. On your appointment as the Member Champion links to various external bodies may have been suggested but you may have also made connections with other organisations.

List the groups with which you have engaged and information about the type of engagement. If you have not engaged with any, please state why.

3. On your appointment as the Member Champion a number of specific issues in the County were identified, which you were asked to address. Briefly explain how you have addressed these and any outcomes as a result of your work.

4. Provide examples where the profile of your area of interest has been raised in addition to the specific information you have given in 3 above.

5. Briefly explain any changes, as a result of your work, made in the Council or planned, including:  
improvements in performance and/or resourcing  
decisions or development of specific policies or reference in other policies.

6. Note below any financial implications directly arising from the work you have carried out as Champion.

## Appendix B

The following will be formatted into a form once we've had comments on the content.

### External report

Powys County Council appoints Councillors as Member Champions to provide a voice for issues or groups which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business that may not be the responsibility of an individual or Committee.

In addition to their other Council responsibilities, Member Champions work to make sure that the issue or group that they are championing are considered when Council policy is being developed and decisions are made

To support the review of the Member Champion role the Council would be grateful if you could please complete the attached feedback form relating to your work with the Member Champion as detailed below.

Member Champion for:            **Title**

Champion:                            Councillor **Name**

1.     Have you had contact with this Member Champion?

Yes or No (please delete as appropriate)

Please give an account of the type of contact. If you answered 'No', please state why:

2.     Are you aware of any instances where the role of Champion has raised the profile of **title**?

Yes or No (please delete as appropriate)

If 'Yes', please provide more detail:

3.     Can you give examples of **title** being taken into account when the Council has made decisions or developed specific policy?

Yes or No (please delete as appropriate)

If 'Yes', please provide more detail:

4.     If you have had contact with this Member Champion briefly explain whether this has had a positive or negative impact on your organisation.

5. From your contact with the Member Champion explain whether you consider the role should continue for a further year and if so, whether there are any issues that the Champion should address.