

MEMBER CHAMPION ROLE DESCRIPTION

Member Champions are appointed to act as advocate on behalf of the Council to promote a particular theme or priority area of the Council's business to provide a focus both for the Council and its partners.

The Champion role exists in order to ensure that issues are kept at the forefront of Council business, making sure that the issue or group that they are championing are taken into account when Council policy is being developed and decisions are made. The areas may not necessarily link to a relevant portfolio.

The role of a Member Champion is intended to complement and support the responsibilities of Portfolio Holders, the Mayor, Scrutiny Chairs and other elected members with designated responsibilities.

Responsibilities of a Member Champion

The main responsibility of each Member Champion is to encourage communication and positive action on the issue or group they represent to:

- raise the profile and signal to the communities of the Borough the Council's commitment to the issue
- make the Council aware of good practice
- ask questions about performance and resourcing for their area
- foster the engagement of a wider range of councillors and officers in the issue
- promote effective communication and positive working relationships both within the Council and amongst partners, stakeholders and community groups
- promote the positive work that is being undertaken within the Borough, both at a regional and national level
- provide positive support and constructive challenge when required, to officers and councillors in driving forward the Council's agenda on the issue

Allocation of Member Champion Roles

The Cabinet is responsible for appointing all the member champions. The appointments made by the Cabinet will be communicated in writing to the Chief Executive and announced at Cabinet.

A member champion may be removed from office at any time by the Leader and with written notice to the Chief Executive. Any member champion may resign from office by giving written notice to the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

Member champions are not entitled to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for carrying out their role.

Relationship with Leader and Cabinet

The Leader of the Council/Cabinet Members will normally:

- acknowledge the right of champions to be consulted on matters relating to their area of interest;
- take full account of any views offered by champions prior to any decision taken on matters within their area of interest;

- co-operate with champions in the formulation of action plans they have agreed with the relevant officer; and
- consider nominating the relevant champion to represent the Council at a relevant conference/seminar on the subject matter of the champion's interest.

Relationship with Overview & Scrutiny

The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Chairs will normally:

- 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
- ensure champions are specifically invited to be contributors to any reviews that have a direct bearing on their interest
- ensure an opportunity is provided for champions to contribute or to comment on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Fulfilling the Role

To fulfil their role effectively, a Member Champion also needs to be able to:

- encourage co-operation and be able to engage community groups
- understand and express the opinions and priorities of the community
- be sensitive to Council priorities and their broader role as a councillor to represent the public
- lead and respond to the whole range of issues rather than focussing upon a single issue
- A champion cannot make decisions and must not commit the Council in any way or in a manner that could be interpreted as being contrary to established policy and practice