

Councillor Champions 2024-2027

Report of the Leader

Recommended:

1. That the revised Terms of Reference for the Councillor Champion Scheme set out at paragraph 2.10.2 of this report be approved.
2. That the Councillors, as set out below, be appointed to the following Councillor Champion roles:

Active Travel	Councillor J Burnage
Armed Forces	Councillor I Jeffrey
Community Resilience	Councillor P Lashbrook
Accessibility	Councillor L Lashbrook
Tourism	Councillor N Gwynne
Voluntary Sector	Councillor I Andersen

SUMMARY:

The report provides an overview of the Council's Councillor Champion Scheme and proposes the appointment of Councillor Champions for the remainder of the term of the Council, until Borough Elections in May 2027 along with revised Terms of Reference.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2017 Cabinet approved the introduction of a Councillor (Member) Champions scheme in order that it could benefit from the experience, knowledge and interests of non-Cabinet members, in particular thematic areas.
- 1.2 Current Councillor Champions Terms of Reference
 1. The role of a Councillor Champion is to act in an advisory capacity to Cabinet in respect of specific areas of responsibility and, in particular, in the development of ideas that will help deliver the aims of the Council's Corporate Plan and Corporate Action Plan. Cabinet members will commission Councillor Champions within their area of responsibility to:
 - a. Research good practice in other Councils and organisations
 - b. Liaise with external bodies such as the Local Government Association (LGA) to identify relevant research and ideas that could help further the Council's corporate aims.
 - c. Consider what impact any proposed changes to Council policy and or, services might have on their specific area of responsibility. This might involve liaising with relevant groups within the Borough.

2. Cabinet members, in consultation with their Cabinet colleagues, have the ability to request that a Member Champion undertakes work, as described in points 1a-c, on behalf of Cabinet.
3. If a Member Champion wishes to instigate a piece of work, the matter will be first discussed with the Leader and the relevant Portfolio Holder. If they are in support of the proposal, the Portfolio Holder will discuss the merits of the proposal with the Head of Service and then present the idea to Cabinet members for consideration and discussion.
4. If endorsed by Cabinet Members the Member Champion, Portfolio Holder and relevant Head of Service will meet to discuss a way forward.
5. The Member Champions roles were established specifically to support Cabinet although the champions themselves need not necessarily come from the ruling group.
6. The roles should not encroach on the independent scrutiny role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or indeed into the role of Cabinet members. Member Champions do not have the authority to commit resources on behalf of the Council or to instruct officers to undertake work on their behalf.
7. The Member Champions are appointed by Cabinet on an annual basis. The role does not attract a Special Responsibility Allowance.

2 Background

- 2.1 Councillors have, from time to time, been appointed to various Champion positions since the scheme has been in place as set out below.
 - Armed Forces
 - Climate Emergency
 - Community Safety and Resilience
 - Culture and Heritage
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Member Development/Community
 - Voluntary and Third Sector
- 2.2 During 2023/24 Councillors were appointed to the positions of Armed Forces and Community Safety and Resilience Champion as these two areas of specialism were identified below as ongoing areas that contribute to and support the Council's corporate priorities.
- 2.3 Other Champion positions were not appointed to in order to allow time for consideration of appropriate areas of focus in light of the new corporate plan and councillors' particular areas of interest.
- 2.4 A review of the Scheme has been undertaken and it is recommended that the following Councillor Champion positions be appointed to for the remainder of the Council's term until May 2027.

2.5 Active Travel Councillor Champion

- 2.5.1 Increasing the opportunities for active and sustainable travel has a role to play in reducing harmful impacts on the climate by lowering carbon emissions through less car use. Active travel also supports reducing health inequalities and contributes to increasing levels of physical activity and the associated benefits of social interaction and mental well-being.
- 2.5.2 The role of the Councillor Champion is to identify opportunities to encourage and support greater use of pedestrian, cycle and other activity for all our communities.

2.6 Armed Forces Councillor Champion

- 2.6.1 This role has been key in the Council's work liaising with the military and veteran communities in the borough. The role in charring meetings of the Civilian Military Forum in particular has been an important one.
- 2.6.2 The continuation of this councillor champion role will allow for the continued strengthening of the relationship between the military and the borough's communities.

2.7 Accessibility Councillor Champion

- 2.7.1 This new Councillor Champion role will focus on providing an ambassadorial and advocacy role for this area of work. Developing an understanding of local communities' aspirations, needs and potential barriers, as well as current service provision for people with disabilities across Test Valley. Identifying areas of best practice to be shared both with external communities and internally with officers and Councillors.
- 2.7.2 This Councillor Champion role will allow for continued strengthening of relationships, as well as development of knowledge and insight on the work of local organisations supporting residents with disabilities, as well as communities themselves.

2.8 Community Resilience Councillor Champion

- 2.8.1 This Community Resilience Councillor Champion has been successful in providing an ambassadorial role, bringing communities together and facilitating through the Test Valley Community Resilience Forum and promoting the Council's local approach to community resilience which has been nationally recognised.
- 2.8.2 This Councillor Champion role is key to promoting and supporting the ongoing work across our communities which seeks to identify local risks and challenges in relation to community resilience, develop local community resilience plans, seek funding, put in place mitigations, and ensure community resilience and local plans are integrated with the Council's Emergency Response Plan.

2.9 Tourism Councillor Champion

2.9.1 Tourism is a relatively small but important sector right across the Borough. The Council's Economic Development Strategy (2024-29) includes an action which sees the development of destination management, marketing and development activities for Test Valley in line with the Tourism Review. A review of TVBC tourism activities was carried out by Blue Sail in Autumn 2023.

2.9.2 This Councillor Champion role will help support the delivery of the outcomes from the Tourism Review and provide support for the ongoing work of the council in relation to tourism.

2.10 Voluntary Sector Champion

2.10.1 To promote the role that the voluntary sector can play in supporting local communities in Test Valley to become more resilient and sustainable. This builds on the Council's place based approach contained within our Corporate Plan – A Place for Everyone – Supporting our Communities to Thrive.

2.10.2 This role will focus on understanding good practice taking place nationally and promoting this to communities in Test Valley.

2.11 Terms of Reference

2.11.1 The Terms of Reference for the Council's Councillor Champion Scheme have been reviewed and refreshed to ensure they allow for an effective scheme that enables continued contribution from the knowledge and experience of non-Cabinet Members. It is proposed that the revised Terms of Reference set out at paragraph 2.10.2 below are adopted.

2.11.2 Councillor Champion Terms of Reference

1. The role of a Councillor Champion is to act in an advisory capacity to Cabinet in respect of specific areas of responsibility and, in particular, in the development of ideas that will help deliver the aims of the Council's Corporate Plan and Corporate Action Plan. The contribution of Councillor Champions may include the following areas:
 - a) Researching good practice in other Councils and organisations.
 - b) Liaising with external bodies to identify relevant research and ideas that could help further the Council's corporate aims.
 - c) Considering what impact any proposed changes to Council policy and or, services might have on their specific area of responsibility. This might involve liaising with relevant groups within the Borough.
2. Cabinet members, in consultation with their Cabinet colleagues, have the ability to request that a Councillor Champion undertakes work, as described in points 1 a-c, on behalf of Cabinet.

3. If a Councillor Champion wishes to instigate a piece of work, the matter will be first discussed with the Leader and the relevant Portfolio Holder. If they are in support of the proposal, the Portfolio Holder will discuss the merits of the proposal with the Head of Service and then present the idea to Cabinet members for consideration and discussion.
4. If endorsed by Cabinet Members, the Councillor Champion, Portfolio Holder and relevant Head of Service will meet to discuss a way forward.
5. The Councillor Champion roles specifically support Cabinet although the champions themselves need not necessarily come from the ruling group.
6. The role of a Councillor Champion should not encroach on the independent scrutiny role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or indeed into the role of Cabinet members.
7. Councillor Champions do not have the authority to commit resources on behalf of the Council or to instruct officers to undertake work on their behalf.
8. Councillors Champions are appointed by Cabinet for the term of the Council.
9. The Councillor Champion role does not attract a Special Responsibility Allowance.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 The role of a Councillor Champion is to act in an advisory capacity to Cabinet in respect of specific areas of responsibility and, in particular, in the development of ideas that will help deliver the aims of the Council's Corporate Plan and Corporate Action Plan.

4 Options

4.1 Option 1

To not appoint Councillor Champions and not approve the refreshed Terms of Reference for the role. This option is not recommended.

4.2 Option 2

To appoint to the Councillor Champion positions as identified in the report for the remainder of the term of the Council, until Borough Elections in May 2027 and approve the refreshed Terms of Reference for the role. This option is recommended.

4.3 Option 3

- 4.4 To make other Councillor Champion appointments and/or amendments to the Terms of Reference.

5 Option Appraisal

- 5.1 Councillor Champions provide valuable insight into their thematic areas providing advice and support to Cabinet members in particular areas of work and helping to shape and develop projects.
- 5.2 Councillor Champions ensure that non-Cabinet members who have specialist knowledge and experience are able to contribute to policy development.
- 5.3 Is it proposed that the Councillor Champion positions as identified in the report be appointed for the remainder of the term of the Council (until May 2027), to allow the continued contribution of knowledge and experience from non-Cabinet members.
- 5.4 The proposed appointments reflect the named Councillors' skills, interests and areas of expertise. Further, the existing Terms of Reference have worked well, and it is proposed to make slight amendments to bring them up to date and include appointment for a Council's term rather than annual appointment. For these reasons, option 2 above is the recommended option.

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 An evaluation of the risks indicates that the existing controls in place mean that no significant risks have been identified at this time.

7 Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no resourcing implications arising from this report.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9 Equality Issues

- 9.1 No equality issues have been identified in appointing the Councillor Champions, though their appointment will contribute to and enhance the Council's equity, diversity and inclusion work.

10 Other Issues

- 10.1 Community Safety -None
- 10.2 Environmental Health Issues - None
- 10.3 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate – None
- 10.4 Property Issues - None
- 10.5 Wards/Communities Affected – None

11 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

- 11.1 The introduction of Councillor Champions has involved more councillors in the process of policy development and at the same time has allowed Cabinet to benefit from the experience, knowledge and interests of non-Cabinet members.
- 11.2 It is proposed that the five Councillor Champion roles be appointed to for the remainder of the term of the council to allow the continued contribution of knowledge and experience from non-Cabinet Members.
- 11.3 Should other champion roles be identified there is the ability to make additional appointments as necessary.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

[Member Champion Cabinet Report 18 October 2017](#)

[Member Champion Appointment Cabinet Report 28 February 2024](#)

Confidentiality

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

No of Annexes:	None	File Ref:	N/A
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(Portfolio: Leader) Councillor P North

Officer:	Emma Silverton	Ext:	8001
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Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	20 November 2024
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