

MEMBER CHAMPION ROLES – UPDATES TO THE CONSTITUTION

SUMMARY

At the Council Meeting in December 2025, the Council agreed a Notice of Motion committing to the principle that the Champion roles should be non-executive, non-political roles, open to all councillors, with appointments made by the Council or a non-executive committee.

This report sets out the proposals for updates to the Constitution to effect this change for consideration by the Committee in advance of a recommendation to the Council.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Consider the proposed updates to the Constitution to support revised arrangements and procedures for Member Champions for the Council.
- 2) Subject to additional points requested by the Committee, **that the Council be recommended** to approve the updates to the Constitution to introduce new arrangements for Member Champions as set out in paragraph 2 and Appendix 2 to the report.

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Current arrangements for Cabinet Champions

- 1.1 The arrangements for Cabinet Champion roles were first established by the Cabinet in 2018 as part of a review of portfolios carried out by the Leader at that time. The Champion roles were intended to enable capacity to 'champion' council plan priorities which were crosscutting of portfolios. Also, to provide leadership development opportunities for Members who are not on the Cabinet. The Constitution does not state a requirement for Cabinet Champions to be members of the administration, albeit historically it has always been the case.
- 1.2 The change to the make-up of the Council to no overall control has prompted further consideration about the Champion roles, and at its meeting on 4th December 2025, the Council agreed a Notice of Motion committing to the

principle that the Champion roles should be non-executive, non-political roles, open to all councillors, with appointments made by the Council or a non-executive committee (copy attached at Appendix 1).

1.3 At its meeting on 12th January, the Constitution Working Group considered the constitutional arrangements that would be needed to effect the changes to the Member Champion Roles. The following points reflect the outcome of that discussion, together with some additional feedback from Group Leaders who supported the approach recommended by the Constitution Working Group.

1.4 The key principles to be incorporated in the Constitution were recommended as:

- That **full Council will have responsibility for determining which champion roles** the Council will have, **and their terms of reference**.
- That the Council will have a ‘standing’ Champion for “**Armed Forces Covenant**” appointed for two years for continuity, and that further Champion roles may be agreed by the Council. Any proposals for additional champion **roles** should start with a recommendation from the Leader of the Council. There will be a maximum limit of three paid champion roles at any one time.
- The Council will confirm appointments to Champion roles, **on the recommendation of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee** (LCB). The LCB Committee will be responsible for considering nominations and recommending terms of reference to accompany the roles.
- Champions will be accountable to the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee and be asked to update to the Committee periodically.
- Champions will be expected to engage with the Leader of the Council/relevant portfolio holder, and to discuss activities that require budget allocation.
- A Guidance Note to be added to the Constitution on Member Champions.
- A distinction to be recognised between the role of the Mayor in respect of civic/military duties and the Armed Forces Covenant Champion for military covenant responsibilities.

2. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

It is suggested that the points set out in para 1.4 above are incorporated with the following amendments made to the Constitution:

- 2.1 It is proposed that the reference to Cabinet Champion roles set out in Part 3 – Section 2 (Executive Functions), para 2.12, be deleted.
- 2.2 A new paragraph be inserted in Part 2 – (The Constitution and how the Council Operates), para 3, to include the information that the Council appoints Member Champions: that the full Council will have responsibility for determining which champion roles the Council will have and confirms the champion appointments on the recommendation of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee. Also, that the Council will have a ‘standing’ Champion for “Armed Forces Covenant”.
- 2.3 A new bullet point added to Part 3, Section 5, Role of the Council, to confirm that the Council will have responsibility for determining which Member champion roles the Council will have, their terms of reference, and appointments to the roles.
- 2.4 The terms of reference of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee, at Part 3, Section 6, to be updated to include responsibility for proposing nominations for appointments to Member Champion roles to the Council and recommending terms of reference to accompany the roles. Also, that Champions will be accountable to the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee and asked to update the Committee periodically.
- 2.5 A new Guidance Note for Member Champions be added to Part 5 of the Constitution describing further details of the arrangements and provisions for champions. A draft Part 5 Guidance Note is attached at Appendix 2.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The Licensing and Corporate Business Committee is recommended to consider the draft constitutional arrangements related to Member Champions in advance of a recommendation to the Council on 19th March.
- 3.2 Further to adoption by the Council, draft terms of reference for the Armed Forces Covenant Champion will be prepared. Nominations to roles and any other terms of reference for additional roles will be considered by the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee at its first meeting of the new municipal year on 4th June 2026.

NOTICE OF MOTION – CHAMPION ROLES

“This council notes that Cabinet Champion roles exist to support and promote key areas of importance to the Borough, and that these roles should operate in a way that best serves residents across the community.

This council further notes that the current arrangements for appointing Cabinet Champions are set out in the Constitution, and that these arrangements place the responsibility for appointments with the Leader of the Council. Council recognises that there is a desire among members for these roles to operate on a non-party political basis, with transparent and cross-party appointment processes.

This council will therefore:

- (1) Commit to the principle that Cabinet Champion roles should be non-executive, non-political positions, open to all councillors, with appointments made by Full Council or the appropriate committee rather than by the Leader, and that the Constitution should be amended to reflect this.
- (2) Request that the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee urgently prepare the necessary constitutional amendments, including role descriptions and accountability arrangements, and bring these proposals to the next available meeting of Full Council.
- (3) Enable Full Council to vote on the revised arrangements for Cabinet Champion roles at the earliest opportunity.”

DRAFT GUIDANCE NOTE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CONSTITUTION:

MEMBER CHAMPIONS

1. Introduction

“Member Champions” are elected members of the Council appointed to act as advocates or spokespeople for particular themes or communities which should be of interest to the Council in delivering its functions.

The Council will have a standing ‘Champion for Armed Forces Covenant’.

Any additional Member Champion Roles to be appointed in any year should be:

- discussed first with the Leader of the Council taking account of Council priorities and Portfolio responsibilities
- cross cutting and represent a sustainable corporate priority which supports the Council’s Delivery Plan
- clearly defined: not open-ended

The Council shall have a maximum of three Champion roles, in receipt of a special responsibility allowance, at any one time.

2. Responsibility for appointment of Member Champions

The full Council has responsibility for approving which champion roles the Council will have, and their terms of reference.

The Council will confirm appointments to Champion roles, on the recommendation of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee (LCB). The LCB Committee will be responsible for considering nominations and recommending terms of reference to accompany the roles.

Nominations

Nominations for roles to be sought in advance and discussed with Group Leaders and Managing Director and Monitoring Officer in advance of a report to the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.

3. Purpose and remit of the Member Champion role

The Member Champion acts in an advocacy and advisory capacity and has no decision-making powers. The Member Champion will ensure that any recommendations for actions arising from the role are referred to the relevant Cabinet Member or Committee Chair and supporting officers.

The Member Champion will be supported by a lead officer as well as the Senior Leadership Team and will be provided with sufficient access to information, briefings

and meetings to enable them to make a meaningful contribution in their Champion role.

The following is a general role description for Member Champions. In addition, topic specific role specifications may supplement this to form the terms of reference:

- To raise the profile of the area of interest/issue with elected members, officers and local communities
- To provide positive support in driving forward the Council's objective on the issue
- To promote effective communication and positive working relationships both within the Council and with community groups and other stakeholders
- To foster cross-party co-operation on the issue

Champion for Armed Forces Covenant and Mayor

The focus of the Champion for the Armed Forces Covenant is to promote the Armed Forces Covenant and actions to deliver the covenant, which is distinct from the role of the Mayor who represents the Borough at civic military/community functions and events.

4. Eligibility and term of office

A Member Champion can be any member of the Council. However, roles should be allocated based on 'best fit' based on previous experience, skills and interest for the role, and with reference to the person specification in para. 6 below.

The Armed Forces Covenant Champion will usually be appointed for two years.

Other Champions will be appointed for one year (or for the remainder of a civic year) and may be re-appointed the following year.

5. Reporting and accountability

Member Champions shall be asked to provide the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee with a periodic summary report of their activities.

Champions will be expected to engage with the Leader of the Council/relevant portfolio holder, and to discuss activities that require budget allocation.

6. Person Specification

Within the Council:

Understanding of the area of interest being championed in terms of council strategies and policy, good practice, improvement and national agendas and the needs of the client group.

Ability to engage with a range of members and officers around the issue and listening to requirements.

Ability to advocate on behalf of the issue/area of interest within the Council

In the Community:

Understanding of the needs of the community in relation to the topic

Ability to engage with residents and community groups in matters related to the topic

Ability to lead and support local initiatives related to the interest

Ability to represent the position of the council to the community in relation to the interest.