

**COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH MARCH 2026****AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 (3)****UPDATES TO THE CONSTITUTION – CHAMPION ROLES**

A Report from the meeting of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee held on 5th March 2026

**SUMMARY**

At the Council Meeting in December 2025, councillors 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.

At its meeting in January, the Constitution Working Group developed some core principles and procedures for revised arrangements for Champions as set out in Paragraph 4.1, and on 5th March the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee considered the proposed revised arrangements for Champions, and the linked updates that would be required to the Constitution to effect this change.

The Committee proposed additional provisions which are summarised in para 4.2 and endorsed the proposals which are now recommended to the Council.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Council is recommended to approve the updates to the Constitution as described in paragraph 2.1 to 2.5 in this report, including the Guidance Note as attached at Appendix 2.

**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 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. 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 Champions (as set out in Appendix 2).
- 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.

1.5 At its meeting on 5th March, the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee made the following additional points:

- Full Council should have powers to dismiss, as well as appoint, Champions

- There should be no Shadow Champions
- When expressions of interest in a Champion role are invited, interested Members should be encouraged to say how they see the role and their ideas to enable an individual element and enthusiasm to be brought to the role.
- Members should be able to make suggestions for Champion roles, which they believe they could fulfil, for initial consideration by the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.
- Champions should not be Cabinet Members or the Mayor, or Deputy Mayor, or the Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.

## **2. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

It is proposed that the points set out in para 1.4 and 1.5 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 state the information that the Council appoints Champions and that the Council will have responsibility for determining which champion roles the Council will have and will confirm 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 Champion roles the Council will have, their terms of reference, appointments to the roles, and to dismiss appointees if necessary. A reference to be made to the Guidance Note in Part 5.
- 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 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. A reference made to the Guidance Note in Part 5.
- 2.5 A new Guidance Note for 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 Following the approval of the new provisions by Council, arrangements will be followed to enable the appointment of Champions for 2026/27:

- Discussion with the Leader and Group Leaders as to potential roles for Champions for 2026/27 in addition to the standing champion for armed forces covenant; this may need to be revisited following the elections.
- Expressions of interest to the Champion roles invited as part of the annual appointments process 2026/27
- Nominations to roles and draft plans will be considered by the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee at its first meeting of the new municipal year on 4th June 2026.

CLLR JACQUI VOSPER  
CHAIR OF LICENSING AND  
CORPORATE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

**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.”

## **CHAMPIONS GUIDANCE NOTE**

### **1. Introduction**

“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’ who shall be appointed for a two-year period or until vesting day in the case of local government reorganisation falling within two-years from the date of appointment.

Other additional Champion Roles 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 Champions**

The full Council has responsibility for approving which champion roles the Council will have, and Champions’ terms of reference/objectives.

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.

The Council shall also have powers to dismiss Champions.

Shadow Champions shall not be appointed.

### **3. Nominations – Expressions of Interest**

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.

When expressions of interest in a Champion role are invited, interested Members should be encouraged to say how they see the role and their ideas to enable an individual element and enthusiasm to be brought to the role.

Members can make suggestions for Champion roles, which they believe they could fulfil, for consideration by the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.

#### **4. Purpose and remit of the Champion role**

The Champion acts in an advocacy and advisory capacity and has no decision-making powers. The 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 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 Champions. In addition, topic specific plans may supplement this:

- 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.

#### **5. Eligibility and term of office**

Champion roles are open to all Members but should not be Cabinet Members or the Mayor, or Deputy Mayor, or the Chair of the Licensing and Corporate Business Committee.

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. 7 below.

The Armed Forces Covenant Champion will 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.

#### **6. Reporting and accountability**

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.

## **7. 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.