

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE: 19TH APRIL 2023
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: MEMBER CHAMPIONS ARRANGEMENTS

Purpose of Report

1. To allow Members to consider the Member Champions arrangements and make a recommendation to the Fire Authority.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] consider the information in the report with a view to making a recommendation to the Fire Authority about the Member Champions arrangements for 2023-24.

Background

2. The Fire Authority decided, at its meeting on 10th February 2021, that the Governance and Constitution Committee should complete a review of the Member Champion roles, following the observations of the Independent Reviewer made as a result of their review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.
3. Members of the committee had an informal discussion, prior to approving the process and indicative timeline of the Member Champion review on 10th November 2021. The following observations were noted:
 - Not clear why there are so many Member Champion roles
 - Need to clarify expectations
 - Must be quantifiable benefit or the roles can be removed
 - Requirement for some kind of annual report
 - Impact of Covid-19 should not be ignored.
4. All Members received an update on progress with the review at the Members' Planning Day on 14th January 2022.
5. The Committee decided at its meeting on 30th March 2022 to recommend to the Fire Authority that it continue with existing Member Champion

arrangements for 2022-23 with the introduction of the requirements outlined in the report (reproduced below);

It is intended that in addition to the Member Champion role description which is set out in paragraphs 6.32 to 6.34 of the Constitution, a specific role profile will be created for each member champion role. The member champion role profiles will provide:

- *An overview of each role;*
- *Lead officer contact details;*
- *Activities associated with the role such as meeting and event attendance;*
- *Training and development opportunities; and*
- *How the activities of the champion will be communicated.*

Democratic Services will create a template role profile for lead officers and Member Champions to complete early in the municipal year 2022-23.

The intention would be to submit a report to the Governance and Constitution Committee in April 2023 to consider progress and determine whether any further improvements could be made to the Member Champion arrangements. At that point the Committee could make further recommendations to the Fire Authority in relation to Member Champions for 2023-24.

Information

6. When the Member Champions for 2022-23 were appointed the respective Lead Officers allocated to each Member Champion were asked to meet with the Member Champions with a view to completing a role profile. For the benefit of any Member that has not seen it previously the role profile format is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
7. The vast majority of role profiles were completed, providing a level of focus for the activities of the Members Champions and Lead Officers. However, as previously noted the level of engagement differs across the Member Champion roles.
8. Officers believe that the Member Champion arrangements have developed during this municipal year, but that there remains work to do to ensure that all Member Champion roles are effective and add value. For now, officers recommend that the current list of Member Champion roles is maintained. However, an in-year review of the role profiles should be undertaken by a small group of Members. Alternatively, the role profiles could be shared with Members at a Members' Planning Day.

Financial Implications

9. There are currently 18 Members appointed to a Member Champion role. Member Champions receive a special responsibility allowance which currently stands at £577.94. The funding for Member Champion roles is met through existing budgets. It should be noted that many Member Champions do not receive this allowance, because they already receive another special responsibility allowance, which is higher than the Member Champion allowance and only the higher allowance is paid.

Legal Implications

10. There is no legal requirement to appoint Member Champions.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

Environmental Implications

12. There are no environmental implications associated with the=is report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE