

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE: 10 NOVEMBER 2021
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF MEMBER CHAMPION ROLES

Purpose of Report

1. To allow Members to agree the process and indicative timeline for the review concerned with the Fire Authority's Member Champion roles.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] consider the process and indicative timeline contained in the report and agree the way forward for the review.

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 within 12 months, following the observations of the Independent Reviewer made as a result of the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.
3. The Member Training and Development Group previously considered this issue. It made the following observations:
 - Significant differences exist between the various Member Champion roles, with some more established than others
 - Description of the role of Member Champions needs to be further developed
 - Expectations of Member Champion need to be clearer
 - Each Member Champion should be given an opportunity to comment on the need for and benefit associated with the role
 - An evidence-based process was required for the review
4. Members of this Committee had an informal discussion about this issue. 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.

Information

5. The following paragraphs set out a broad plan for the review, with some indicative timings. Members are asked to consider the plan and specify any additional steps/issues that they wish to be added/considered.
- a) Any Member Champion roles within the constituent authorities will be checked and all relevant information summarised.
[By end November 2021 – Democratic Services]
 - b) Any Member Champion roles within the fire and rescue authorities in the family audit group will be checked and all relevant information summarised.
[By end November 2021 – Democratic Services]
 - c) All Members will be asked what their expectations are for the review as well as being encouraged to make suggestions about the current Member Champion roles.
[Mid November 2021 – Democratic Services, request]
[Early December 2021 – Members, response]
 - d) Officers that are aligned to the Member Champion roles will be asked for their suggestions about the current Member Champion roles.
[Mid November 2021 – Democratic Services, request]
[Early December 2021 – Officers, response]
 - e) Officers will consider the feedback from Members and officers.
[December 2021 – Democratic Services and Service Management Team]
 - f) Members will consider the feedback from Members and officers.
[14th January 2022 – Members’ Planning Day]
 - g) Report to Governance and Constitution Committee
[6th April 2022 – draft proposals]
 - h) Report to Fire Authority
[27th April 2022 – finalise arrangements for Member Champion roles 2022-23]

It is possible that members of this Committee will consider this issue informally before the draft proposals are presented in April.

Financial Implications

6. Member Champions receive a special responsibility allowance which currently stands at £540.96. Not all Member Champions receive this allowance as some receive other special responsibility allowances; only the highest is paid. For 2021-22, 9 of the 18 Members Champions were paid a special responsibility allowance for their Member Champion role. Therefore, any reduction in the number of Member Champions will have a limited impact on the overall Members' Allowances budget.

Legal Implications

7. There is no legal requirement to appointment Member Champions.

Equality and Diversity Implications

8. All Members and relevant officers will have the opportunity to take part in the review.

Environmental Implications

9. There are no environmental implications associated with the review.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**