

## **Protocol adopted by Torfaen County Borough Council for Member Champions.**

### **Protocol – Member Champions**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Member champions are elected members who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council's business. Member Champions exist to provide a voice for traditionally underrepresented groups, or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of council business although they may not be the responsibility of any individual or committee. The main responsibility of each member champion is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent.

#### **2. Appointment of Member Champions**

- 2.1 The Leader is responsible for appointing member champions. Any member of the Council may be member champion, including the Leader.
- 2.2 Member champions will generally be appointed following the whole local government elections that take place every five years and will normally be expected to serve for the period of his/her term of office to ensure some stability in the role. However, an appointment may be made during the five year period to any new position that is established or to a position where there is a vacancy. The appointments made by the Leader must be communicated in writing to the Chief Executive and noted by Full Council.
- 2.3 Any appointment should have due regard to the suitability for the role and relevant national and local guidance.
- 2.4 A member champion may be removed from office at any time by the Leader by written notice to the Chief Executive.
- 2.5 Any member champion may resign from office by giving written notice to the Leader and the Chief Executive.

#### **3. Role of Member Champions**

- 3.1 All member champions will have a job description setting out their respective roles. These will be developed in consultation with the Leader and the champion concerned. Examples of possible roles for champions that may be appropriate to include in a job description are set out in Appendix 1 to this protocol.

#### **4. The Parameters of the Member Champion Role**

- 4.1 All member champions must act reasonably in their role and recognise and work effectively within the political management and working arrangements adopted by the Council.

- 4.2 A champion cannot make decisions (unless the champion is a Cabinet Member with delegated authority) and must not commit the Council in any way or in a manner that could be interpreted as being contrary to established policy and practice. They may, however, confirm a position as stated in a published policy.

## **5. Cabinet Members – Working Relationship**

- 5.1 The first point of liaison on all relevant issues for the Member Champion will be through the Cabinet Member/Leader.

- 5.2 Cabinet Members will normally:

- (a) acknowledge the right of champions to be briefed on matters relating to their area of interest;
- (b) take account of any views (if offered) by champions prior to any decision taken (by a Cabinet member with delegated authority) on matters within their area of interest;
- (c) in liaison with the Leader consider nominating the relevant champion to represent the Council at a relevant conference/seminar on the subject matter of the champions interest.

## **6. Accountability**

- 6.1 At the beginning of each municipal year, each member champion may agree with the relevant Cabinet member and officers a programme of activity, taking into account the Council's County Plan Objectives.

- 6.2 The Member Champion will liaise with their Cabinet Member to keep the Council updated on any issues arising.

## **7. Training**

- 7.1 As with all elected members, member champions will have the opportunity to attend training courses available to them via the Council's E-Learning platform.

## **8. Attendance at Seminars and Conferences**

- 8.1 The attendance by member champions at conferences/seminars relevant to their roles will only be approved following consultation with the Leader in consultation with the Democratic Services Manager. When approved, expenses may be claimed.

## **9. Allowances**

- 9.1 None of the member champions are entitled to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for carrying out their role.

## **10. Interests**

- 10.1 Member Champions are reminded to ensure any interests they may have are declared at all appropriate points.

## **11. Dispute Mechanism**

11.1 In the event that a dispute arises in relation to the operation of this protocol such dispute must be referred to the Chief Executive whose decision on the dispute shall be final. The parties to any dispute are expected to be provided to the Chief Executive (or any person nominated by him to determine the dispute) such information as he may reasonably require to make a decision on the dispute.

## **Appendix 1**

### **1. Accountabilities**

- To Full Council

### **2. Role Purpose and Activities Within the Council**

- To promote the interest being championed within the Council's corporate and service priorities
- To promote the needs of the client group represented in the interest to the decision makers within the council
- To work with the decision makers in the Council to establish strategies/policies/work plans connected with the interest
- To maintain an awareness of all matters connected with the interest
- To contribute to good practice and the continuous improvement of services and functions related to the interest
- To engage with members in matters related to the interest such as attending Overview and Scrutiny/Cabinet /Full Council meetings etc, specifically attending relevant scrutiny committees to advise members on the area of the Council's business they are championing
- To raise the profile of the interest in the community
- To engage with citizens and community groups in matters related to the interest
- To lead and support local initiatives related to the interest

### **3. Values**

**To be committed to the values of the Council and the following values in public office:**

- Openness and transparency
- Honesty and integrity
- Tolerance and respect
- Equality and fairness
- Appreciation of cultural difference
- Sustainability
- Inclusive leadership

## LIST OF MEMBER CHAMPIONS

Member Champions fall into two groups, the first group are portfolio holders (Cabinet Members) whose responsibilities as champion align specifically with their existing portfolio.

- Age Friendly Champion (previously Older Persons Champion) – **Executive Member Adult Services & Housing**
- Equalities & Diversity Champion – **Executive Member Corporate Governance and Performance**
- Anti-Poverty Champion – **Leader of the Council**
- Young Person's Champion- **Executive Member for Children, Families and Education**

The second group are the non-portfolio member champions

- Members Training & Development Champion – **Chair of Democratic Services**
- Armed Forces Champion
- Carers Champion
- Sustainability/Climate Change Champion
- World Heritage Champion
- Motor Neuron Disease (MND)
- Dementia Champion
- Gypsy Traveller Community Champion
- Mental Health Champion