

**Report To:** Corporate Governance Committee  
**Date of Meeting:** 27<sup>th</sup> February 2013  
**Lead Member / Officer:** Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
**Report Author:** Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
**Title:** Role of Champions

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**1. What is the report about?**

1.1 This report sets out the different roles that have been suggested by Members to be undertaken by Member Champions.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

2.1 To seek the Committee's views and recommendations regarding the various Champion roles that have been suggested and the process by which Members should be appointed to any recommended roles.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1 That the Committee considers what additional, if any, Champion roles should be recommended to Full Council, the method by which such Champions should be appointed and the role descriptions that should be applied to those roles.

**4. Report details**

4.1 The role of Champions in this Council has evolved from the appointment of an 'Older People's Champion' which was as a result of guidance issued by the Welsh Government that every local authority in Wales should have such a champion.

4.2 The Council's Constitution currently identifies four Champion roles. These are:

Older People's Champion  
Homelessness Champion  
Carers' Champion  
Learning Disabilities Champion

4.3 At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012 Council resolved that the four Champions set out in 4.2 above should be appointed at the Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and adopted role descriptions for these Champions. These role descriptions are set out in Appendix 1.

4.4 Council further resolved that the Corporate Governance Committee should be asked to consider whether there was merit in appointing Champions for other interests identified by members and provide clarification of these roles if recommended as suitable for adoption.

4.5 The other interests suggested by Members at the Council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November were as follows:

Young Persons' Champion  
Young Carers' Champion  
Scrutiny Champion

4.6 In addition, the Council endorsed the Armed Forces Community Covenant in September 2012. During the debate on this matter it was suggested that consideration of an Armed Forces Champion be part of the review of Champions generally.

4.7 The Council has recently also received a letter from the WLGA spokesperson for Welfare Reform and Poverty asking that authorities consider appointing Poverty Champions.

4.8 A survey of other local authorities in Wales has revealed that there is a wide variation in how Champions are appointed and the areas of interest that they champion. In at least one authority, there are no champions.

4.9 The responses received from other Councils in respect of their Champions are set out in a table as Appendix 2 to this report.

4.10 The one consistent role in respect of which champions have been appointed across Wales is that of an Older People's Champion. In some authorities this may have a slightly different title and is sometimes part of a wider champion brief. Other common champion roles relate to Carers, Disability, Member Development, Children and Scrutiny.

4.11 As set out in 4.2 above the Council has already appointed a Champion for Carers and has a Learning Disability Champion.

4.12 The Council does not have a Scrutiny Champion appointed by Council. There has been a Scrutiny Champion in the past which has been a role to which the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny have appointed one of their number. This is consistent with the practice of other Councils. There is a Scrutiny Champions Network which exchanges information and ideas about Scrutiny.

4.13 Many Councils consider that the role of Champion is unnecessary where there is a Lead Member with responsibility for a certain area. In these authorities Champions are only appointed where there is no clear Lead Member responsibility or there is a clear cross cutting theme.

4.14 Members should take into account in considering these roles whether there is already a clear role in respect of these issues contained within Lead Member Portfolios. A copy of the Lead Member Portfolios are attached as Appendix 3 to the report.

4.15 At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012 Council approved role descriptions for the four identified Champion roles. These are attached as Appendix 1. These role descriptions seek to provide clarity and consistency as to the role of Champions in Denbighshire. It is suggested that any new roles should have similar descriptions. Members may also wish to consider whether Champions should be required, once appointed, to set out their priority activities as Champions and report back, perhaps on an annual basis, to a committee or other member forum on their progress during the year.

4.16 There is also variety in the way in which Champions are appointed. In some authorities, Champions are appointed by the Executive, or in some cases the Leader. In other authorities Champions are appointed by Council. The Champions currently identified in this Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 4.2 above are appointed by Council. Members are asked to consider whether this is the most appropriate method of appointing further Champions.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

5.1 The existing Champion roles contribute to the priorities regarding vulnerable people and access to good quality housing.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

6.1 There are no direct costs associated with this report.

## **7. What consultations have been carried out?**

7.1 Group Leaders were consulted and were in favour of appointing the four Champion roles approved by Council in November 2012. All Members have been given an opportunity to suggest other champion roles. Other Welsh authorities have been surveyed as to their Champions.

7.2 SLT were consulted on the role of Champions and expressed concern that there is the possibility of confusion and/or duplication between the roles of Champions and Lead Members where the issue to be championed falls within the remit of an individual Lead Member.

## **8. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

8.1 There are no additional costs directly associated with this report.

## **9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

9.1 There are no identified risks.

## **10. Power to make the Decision**

10.1 Section 2 Local Government Act 2000.