

North Yorkshire Council

EXECUTIVE

15 October 2024

Annual Review of Member Champions

**Report of the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services and
Monitoring Officer**

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To enable the Executive to consider whether the Member Champion role and remit remains in line with the Council's priorities/challenges.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Executive on 18 July 2023, the following appointments to the roles of Member Champion were confirmed:

- Armed Forces Champion – Councillor Kevin Foster
- Digital Champion – Councillor Gareth Dadd
- Flooding Champion – Councillor John Cattanach
- Cycling / Active Travel Champion – Councillor Keane Duncan
- Road Safety Champion – Councillor Steve Watson.

- 2.2 The above appointments are made by the Leader of the Council and do not attract a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA).

- 2.3 Appointments to the following Member Champion roles, which attract an SRA, were previously made by Full Council and so noted at the meeting:

- Older People's Champion - Councillor Caroline Dickinson
- Young People Champion - Councillor Alyson Baker
- Climate Change Champion - Councillor Paul Haslam.

- 2.4 At the meeting of Council on 24 July 2024, Councillor David Hugill was appointed the Climate Change Champion in the place of Councillor Paul Haslam.

- 2.5 It was noted in the minutes of the meeting of the Executive on 18 July 2023 that there was the intention to undertake 'an annual review (of Member Champion roles) to ensure they remained appropriate and in line with the Council's priorities/challenges'.

3.0 MEMBER CHAMPION ROLE AND REMIT

- 3.1 The role and remit of the Member Champions is as stated in the Council Constitution at pages 150 - 151 - [NYC Constitution - Version 8 - July 2024.pdf \(northyorks.gov.uk\)](#) and as summarised below:

- 3.2 Member Champions are elected Members who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Council's business. The main responsibility of each Member Champion

is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent. In doing so, they will:

- i) represent their area of interest both within and outside the Council in line with Council policy;
- ii) contribute to the review and development of policies pertaining to their area of interest;
- iii) challenge and question the Council, the Executive Members and the Chairs of Committees on issues relevant to their area of responsibility;
- iv) monitor the Forward Plan and seek information from the Leader, Committee Chairs and Officers about forthcoming business and exert influence on behalf of the interest;
- v) keep Members of all parties up to date with activities in relevant to the area of interest;
- vi) provide positive support and on occasions constructive challenge to Officers on relevant issues;
- vii) act as the Council's representative on relevant external bodies where appointed to by the Council.

3.3 Member Champions are appointed in other local authorities, unitary, county and district and borough councils. Whilst the roles vary to a degree in scope and also the areas of work that they are allied to, they are usually restricted from making formal decisions and cannot commit the Council to any course of any not previously agreed. Instead, their role is one of promoting their area of interest on behalf of the Council. The main responsibility of each member champion is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent.

3.4 A review of Member Champion roles in other local authorities has revealed a wide of different areas of focus. Whilst many are similar to those currently appointed to in the Council, there also champions for: mental health; equality, diversity and inclusion; and heritage.

4.0 WORK OF THE MEMBER CHAMPIONS 2023/24

4.1 The Member Champions who are appointed by Council and who receive an SRA provide regular reports to Scrutiny Board and the overview and scrutiny committees. An example is the Annual Report of the Older People's Champion that went to the Care and Independence and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 March 2024. A copy of the report is on the Council website here (see agenda item 8) - [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Care and Independence and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 28/03/2024 10:00 \(northyorks.gov.uk\)](#)

4.2 The Member Champions who are appointed by the Leader and who do not receive an SRA, link in with the relevant directorate. In doing so, they have been able to raise a range of issues and concerns with the corporate directors and their teams, whilst also being able to represent the directorates at meetings and ensure that the Council's position on key issues is conveyed.

4.3 The Member Champions receive officer support in their role through the relevant directorate and Democratic Services and Scrutiny. The Champions also liaise with the Executive Members. This helps ensure that their work is co-ordinated and that there is no duplication of effort or overlap.

4.4 Whilst the role and remit of the Member Champions outlined in the Constitution is helpful and provides a guide for the work that they undertake, there may be some value in

considering whether some more detailed role description would be helpful for each of the individual Member Champion remits.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Member Champions continue to play a key role in promoting their area of interest on behalf of the Council and in encouraging communication and positive action over the issue they represent. This provides an important additional level of engagement and support on key priorities for the Council.

6.0 FINANCIAL & LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The role and remit of the Member Champions is as detailed in the Constitution and appointments are made either by Full Council or by the Leader. A Special Responsibility Allowance is paid, to the three Member Champions appointed by Full Council. This is £1,879 each for the financial year 2024-25.

7.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There is a Member Champion whose role is focussed upon climate change mitigation and the promotion of approaches that enable to achievement of the Councils carbon emissions targets and objectives.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no significant equalities implications.

9.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The report is brought to the Executive to consider as part of an established process for an annual review of the role and remit of the Member Champions.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Executive is asked to note the report and consider whether the Member Champion roles remain appropriate and in line with the Council's priorities/challenges.

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Background Documents:

Agenda, papers and minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 18 July 2023 (item 12) - [Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 18th July, 2023, 11.00 am | North Yorkshire Council](#)

The Council Constitution - [NYC Constitution - Version 8 - July 2024.pdf \(northyorks.gov.uk\)](#)

The report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Member Allowances that went to the meeting of Full Council on 15 November 2023 (item 10) - [Agenda for Full Council on Wednesday, 15th November, 2023, 10.30 am | North Yorkshire Council](#)

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.