

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

3 SEPTEMBER 2009

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Access and Communities – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor David Coleman

“CHAMPION” ROLE DESCRIPTION AND APPOINTMENT OF OLDER PEOPLE’S CHAMPION

1. Summary

The report proposes a general role description for Councillors appointed as “Champions” together with specific responsibilities in relation to older people’s issues and seeks the appointment of an Older People’s Champion in accordance with the recommendation of the Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee following its scrutiny review of the Older People’s Strategy.

2. Recommendations

1. That the generic role description for Councillors appointed as “Champions” set out in paragraph 6 of the report be approved.

2. That the Cabinet Member for Access and Communities be appointed as Older People’s Champion and that the additional specific responsibilities in relation to older people’s issues set out in paragraph 4 of the report be approved.

3. That key partner organisations be asked to consider appointing an Older People’s Champion to fulfil similar roles to those outlined in paragraph 4.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To clarify the role of “Champions” appointed by the Council.

To promote and represent the interests of older people.

To implement the recommendation of the Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee following its scrutiny review of the Older People’s Strategy.

4. Members’ Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council’s code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to

prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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DETAIL

1. The Older People’s National Framework (NSF) introduced the idea of older people’s champions who would play a key role in promoting the interests of older people. The position on older people’s champions was summarised by the Department of Health as follows:

“In general champions are people with a desire to improve older people’s services and are willing to work together and use their influence to stand up for the interests of older people. They have a role in ensuring older people have access to information about local services and plans for older people. All champions will be committed to rooting out age discrimination in access to treatment and services and helping to implement the NSF and related services for older people.”

(Department of Health Website. April 2003)

2. During 2008/09, the Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee undertook a scrutiny review of the Older People’ Strategy and examined progress against the Action Plan. The Committee was mindful of the diverse make up of services both within the Council that contributed towards the Council’s Older People’s Strategy, as well as other public, private, voluntary, community sector and Third Sector organisations. The absence of a developed elected Member role within the authority to act as a dedicated focal point and champion for older peoples issues was identified by Members and the Committee felt that the appointment of a Member champion would help raise the profile of older people. Should such a role be established, it was

hoped that it would encourage other public and partner organisations to follow suit. Cabinet subsequently approved the Committee's recommendation:

"That consideration be given to the development of an Older Persons Elected Member Champion role to provide a focal point and be an advocate for promoting Older Peoples issues and that other key partner organisations be asked to consider adopting a similar role."

3. The Department of Health's "A Toolkit for Older People's Champions" highlights the four types of older people's champion in the NSF as:

- An elected Council member who leads for older people across their Council
- A NHS non-executive director who leads for older people across their Trust
- Older people's representatives themselves
- A Clinical or Practice Champion

4. Whilst recognising that the role of older people's champions is constantly evolving and local structures vary, the Toolkit identifies the following core aspects of the role as:

- Identify, challenge and help to eradicate age discrimination. This includes challenging ageist language, such as the way older people are sometimes inappropriately addressed. It could also include questioning the terminology frequently used by health and social care organisations, such as the distinction sometimes made between "adults" and "older people", as though older people were not adults.
- Ensure that issues of concern for older people are always considered in local planning and decision making, and that the implications for the well-being of older people of all policies are considered (e.g. transport, leisure, education) – not just those that are clearly "health" or "social care" issues.
- Draw attention at a national level to issues of concern that apply more widely than the local level.
- Ensure that older people are always fully involved with statutory and voluntary organisations that are planning, making decisions on and delivering services that affect them.
- Respect diversity and support local efforts to include the whole range of older people – older and younger "older people"; and those who are fit and well and those who have significant health problems or disabilities; older people from all ethnic backgrounds; women and men; older people from all backgrounds, whatever their lifestyle, sexuality, whether they live alone, with family or in residential or nursing home care etc.
- Work towards effective partnerships between older people and health and social care professionals and others involved in planning or running public, private and voluntary services.
- Take care to encourage wide participation by older people in local decision making – not just speaking for older people, but ensuring that older people are fully able to make their views known, individually and through their organisations, as appropriate.
- Take an interest in the quality and availability of information for older people, ensuring that it is appropriate, easy to understand, free of jargon, and accessible to people who have visual or hearing difficulties, and to people who are not able to speak and/or read English with ease.

5. Given that the remit of the Older Person's Champion will relate to all policies and services and not solely health and social care issues, the Cabinet Member for Access and Communities would seem to be the most appropriate Member to represent the interests of older people.

6. The following generic role description for the role of a "champion" is recommended for approval by Cabinet together with the additional responsibilities in respect of older people's issues set out in paragraph 4 above:

- To make contact with local organisation concerned with the designated section of the community or range of activities and to establish effective and regular consultation arrangements with those organisation.
- To represent the views of such organisations to the Council, Cabinet, Renaissance, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other Committees and to officers in all relevant aspects of the Council's activities.
- To act as an advocate on behalf of the relevant section of the community or range of activities within the Council as an organisation and to the wider community.
- To become familiar with the needs and priorities of the relevant section of the community or range of activities and to weigh up the interests expressed in order to provide sound advice on the implications of alternative courses of action.
- To feed back the Council and to explain the Council's position on specific issues of concern to representative organisations and to individuals involved.
- To report at least annually to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee on work undertaken over each year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

RISK ASSESSMENT

This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

The appointment of an older people's champion supports priorities contained in the Older Adults section of the Council Plan.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The appointment of an older people's champion will seek to have a positive impact on the lives of older people within the Borough.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

None

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Background Papers

Department for Health – A Toolkit for Older People's Champions

Final Report of the Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee on Review on Older People's Strategy

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

None