



LOCAL PROTOCOL

on

MEMBER CHAMPIONS

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Member Champions are elected Members who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Fire Authority's business. The main responsibility of each Member Champion is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent.
- 1.2 Member Champions have evolved in the Fire Authority as a result of:
 - (a) legislation and national initiatives in relation to the development of services, and
 - (b) initiatives undertaken by the Fire Authority in wishing to focus Member activity on certain aspects of the Fire Authority's business and functions.

2. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER CHAMPIONS

- 2.1 The Fire Authority is responsible for appointing Member Champions. All Political Group Leaders will be consulted before any appointments are confirmed by the Fire Authority. A Member Champion may be any Member of the Fire Authority.

The following Champions have been designated:

- (a) Health and Safety Champion
 - (b) Community Safety Champion
 - (c) Environmental Champion
 - (d) Equality and Diversity Champion
 - (e) Member Development Champion
- 2.2 The Fire Authority will normally seek expressions of interest in the role prior to making an appointment.
- 2.3 Member Champions will normally be appointed on an annual basis.
- 2.4 Although there is no legal requirement to apply the political balance rules to the appointments, there will be an expectation that the roles will normally be shared proportionately to reflect the political balance of the Fire Authority. However, any appointment should have due regard to the suitability for the role and relevant national and local guidance.
- 2.5 A Member Champion may be removed from office at any time by the Fire Authority by a majority resolution.
- 2.6 Any Member Champion may resign from office by giving written notice to the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer .

3. ROLE OF MEMBER CHAMPIONS

- 3.1 All Member Champions will have a job description setting out their respective roles. These will be developed by the relevant Director in consultation with the Chairman of the Fire Authority and the champion concerned. Examples of possible roles for champions that may be appropriate to include in a job description are set out in Annex 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 Fire Authority.
- 4.2 A Champion cannot make decisions and must not commit the Fire Authority 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.
- 4.3 A Champion may be a recognised media contact with the prior approval of the Chairman. Where such approval has not been obtained, the Champion must make it clear when communicating with the media that he/she is speaking on behalf of a political group (if affiliated to a group) or in a personal capacity and not as the Fire Authority's Champion.

5. CHAIRMAN/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – WORKING RELATIONSHIP

- 5.1 The Chairman and the Management Committee will normally:
 - (a) acknowledge the right of Champions to be consulted on matters relating to their area of interest;
 - (b) take full account of any views offered by Champions prior to any decision taken on matters within their area of interest;
 - (c) co-operate with Champions in the formulation of action plans they have agreed with the relevant Officer; and
 - (d) consider nominating the relevant champion to represent the Fire Authority at a relevant conference/seminar on the subject matter of the Champions interest.

6. AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW – WORKING RELATIONSHIP

- 6.1 The Audit and Performance Review Committee Chairman will normally:
 - (a) acknowledge the right of Champions to be consulted and to participate in discussions on matters relating to their interest;
 - (b) ensure there is appropriate engagement or consultation with Champions in the formulation of policy;
 - (c) ensure Champions are specifically invited to be contributors to any reviews that have a direct bearing on their interest; and
 - (d) ensure an opportunity is provided for Champions to contribute or to comment on the Audit and Performance Review Work Programme.

7. OFFICER SUPPORT TO MEMBER CHAMPIONS

- 7.1 The Member Champions play an important role in promoting their area of interest on behalf of the Fire Authority. In recognition of the importance of the respective roles of Champions, Officer support will be provided at a senior level.
- 7.2 Each Member Champion will be advised by a nominated Officer. The Officer will meet with the relevant Member Champion on a regular basis to discuss

action plans, current activities, national developments or any other matters relating to the interest being championed.

- 7.3 The Officer concerned will give all reasonable support to the Member Champion, including the provision of Fire Authority information, government communications and national publications within their remit.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY

- 8.1 At the beginning of each municipal year, each Member Champion shall agree with the Fire Authority, the appropriate Committee(s), or Working Party and the nominated Officer a programme of activity, with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) targets, taking into account the Fire Authority's priorities.
- 8.2 Each Member Champion will, with the assistance of the relevant Officer, prepare a six monthly report for submission to the Fire Authority and/or the Executive Committee setting out the actions taken during the course of the year and how these have contributed to the Fire Authority's priorities. The main measure of performance will be through the annual report.
- 8.3 A Member Champion may be questioned by another Member of the Fire Authority on their respective area of interest at a meeting of the Fire Authority in accordance with Standing Orders 30 - 42 in relation to Fire Authority meetings.

9. TRAINING

- 9.1 All Member Champions will normally have the opportunity to attend appropriate training courses.

10. ATTENDANCE AT SEMINARS CONFERENCES

- 10.1 The attendance of Member Champions at conferences/seminars relevant to their roles will be agreed by the Champion and the Management Committee. In the case of attendance at short notice, the Chairman of the Fire Authority may give consent subject to confirmation that the cost can be met from within existing budgets.

11. ALLOWANCES

- 11.1 Member Champions are entitled to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for carrying out this role, as agreed by the Fire Authority at its Annual Meeting in June 2009.

12. DISPUTE MECHANISM

- 12.1 In the event that a dispute arises in relation to the operation of this protocol and it cannot be settled informally, then the Chief Fire Officer, having met the person(s) concerned, will arrange and attend a meeting between the Chairman and the appropriate group leader(s) to resolve the situation.

13. REVIEW OF PROTOCOL

- 13.1 This Protocol will be reviewed every 2 years.

ROLE OF MEMBER CHAMPIONS

Accountabilities

To the full Fire Authority.

Role Purpose and Activities

- (a) To champion the Fire Authority's adopted policy for the relevant theme;
- (b) To promote their area of interest within and outside the Fire Authority;
- (c) To contribute to the review and development of policies relating to the area of interest;
- (d) To challenge and question the Fire Authority and Committees on issues affecting their area;
- (e) To attend meetings of the Fire Authority and its Committees and Working Parties and speak on issues (when permitted by the person presiding at the meeting) relevant to their area;
- (f) To act as a catalyst for change and improvement in service delivery;
- (g) To monitor the Forward Plan and seek information from the relevant Officers and other Members about forthcoming business and exert influence on behalf of the interest;
- (h) To monitor scrutiny plans and activity and seek information and offer views on relevant review subjects and exert influence on behalf of the interest;
- (i) To seek to place appropriate items on Member meeting Agendas;
- (j) To keep Members updated regarding activities relevant to the interest;
- (k) To network with Member Champions from other Fire Authorities with the same interest to keep up-to-date with current developments;
- (l) To provide positive support, and on occasion, constructive challenge to Officers in driving forward the Fire Authority's agenda on relevant issues; and
- (m) To act as the Fire Authority's representative on relevant external bodies where Fire Authority representation is required or sought.

Values

To be committed to the values of the Fire Authority and public office, namely:

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

MEMBER CHAMPION PERSON SPECIFICATION

1. Understanding of the area of interest being championed in terms of Fire Authority strategies and policy, good practice, Improvement and National Agendas.
2. Ability to engage with a range of Members and Officers around the area of interest and listening to requirements
3. Ability to advocate on behalf of the championed area of interest within the Fire Authority
4. Ability to engage with citizens and community groups, where appropriate in matters related to the interest.
5. Ability to lead and support local initiatives related to the interest.
6. Ability to represent the position of the Fire Authority to the community in relation to the interest.