

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Head of Corporate Services

REPORT NUMBER **F91**

TO: STRATEGY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING 28 September 2006

MEMBER CHAMPIONS

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 23 February 2006, the Council accepted the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee that a Member Champion be elected for each of the Council's priorities where the Council considered that this would be beneficial and necessary. In accepting the recommendation, Members were aware that the intention was for a report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Council setting out proposals for Member Champions. They were also aware that a number of Champions/Specialist Members had already been appointed.
- 1.2 The current arrangements are set out below, together with options for future arrangements, and recommendations.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

- 2.1 That Option 3 be adopted as the framework for appointing Member Champions, and that this approach be recommended to the new Council in 2007.
- 2.2 That the definition and the role of a Member Champion as set out at paragraph 4.2 be adopted.
- 2.3 That the appointment of new Member Champions be delayed until the new Council in 2007.
- 2.4 That the Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to consider the introduction of a Special Responsibility Allowance for Member Champions.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Financial implications will be considered as part of the Independent Remuneration Panel's review.

4. **KEY INFORMATION**

- 4.1 This report builds on the acceptance by Council of the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee that, if appropriate, a Member Champion be elected for each of the Council's priorities. It sets out:-
- The role and definition of a Member Champion,
 - The relationship between Member Champions and representatives of the Council on outside bodies,
 - The relationship between Member Champions and the Strategy Committee.

4.2 Based on the definitions of other councils it is proposed that Babergh defines a Member Champion as follows:-

A Member Champion is an elected Council Member who has been given responsibility for:

- (a) promoting an issue on which the Council has been given a remit by Central Government or
- (b) a local priority issue of which the Council wishes to raise the profile.

A Member Champion has no power to make decisions on behalf of the Council in relation to his/her champion area.

Each Member Champion keeps a focus on his/her issue by:-

- Raising the profile of the issue and signalling to the communities of Babergh the Council's commitment to the issue.
- Fostering the engagement of a wider range of Members in the review and development of the issue.
- Promoting effective communication and positive working relationships both within the Council and amongst partners, stakeholders and community groups.
- Promoting the positive work that is being undertaken within the District.
- Providing positive support and, on occasions, constructive challenge to officers in driving forward the Council's agenda on the issue.
- Being sensitive to the Council priorities. In championing their area they should not do so at the expense of Council Policy and Corporate Policies.
- Reporting back.

4.3 The Council provides a number of Members to sit on outside bodies on behalf of the Council. The table below sets out the Member representatives on district-wide strategic bodies. Those Members in bold italics are not members of the Strategy Committee.

District-wide Strategic Body	Representative
SSP	N Ridley
CDRP	N Ridley, N Bennett
EERA	<i>P Jones</i>
Local Gov Association Assembly	N Ridley

4.4 For the vast majority of the bodies for which the Council provides Members there is no need for the Member to be on Strategy Committee as, whilst the Council may be supportive of the work the body does, it does not directly impact on the strategic work of the Council. However, for the bodies listed above there is a strategic impact across the entire district and it is suggested that the representatives on these bodies are drawn from Strategy Committee.

4.5 For strategic bodies that cover part of the district, i.e. Haven Gateway, Babergh East LSP and Western Suffolk LSP, local representation by Members within the body or partnership area allows local people's views to be represented. The Member as a local community leader is an important dimension and it is proposed that representation be drawn directly from the Council.

4.6 The table below sets out current Member Champions and the area they champion. Those Members in bold italics are not members of the Strategy Committee.

Link to Corporate Priority	Champion Area	Member Champion
Promote healthy living and reduce health inequalities		None.
Increase the supply of housing that local people can afford to rent or buy		None
Maintain a safe, clean and sustainable environment	Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy	<i>Clive Arthey</i>
Give easy, convenient access to quality public services	Efficiencies and Procurement	Humphrey Todd
	E-government	Duncan Read
	CPA	Chairman of Strategy Committee
	Equalities	<i>David Wood</i>
	CAST Board	Michael Miller
Raise individual and community ambitions and encourage active citizenship	Health and Safety	<i>David Rose</i>
	Children and Young People	Frances Bates
	Arts and Culture	Sue Wigglesworth

- 4.7 At present no Champion's remit covers an entire priority, and there is currently no Member Champion for the health or housing priorities.

Options for dealing with Member Champions

Option 1

- 4.8 That Member Champions are not appointed to the Council's priorities. Instead Member Champions are only appointed to issues that guidance or legislation requires, or the Council feels of significant importance to need a champion.

Option 2

- 4.9 That a Member Champion be appointed for each of the Council's priorities based on membership of either Babergh or outside bodies that have a strategic impact on that priority. Member Champions on bodies that could be aligned to the priorities are detailed below. Consideration would then need to be given to how Member Champions who are not members of Strategy Committee can 'champion' their area in the strategic policy and decision-making process and reporting back arrangements.

Link to Corporate Priority	Board/Partnership drawn from	Member Champion
Promote healthy living and reduce health inequalities	SC Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel	Richard Kemp
Increase the supply of housing that local people can afford to rent or buy	Babergh Housing Panel	Sue Wigglesworth
Maintain a safe, clean and sustainable environment	Clean - Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy	Clive Arthey
	Safe – Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, RAG Member	Nick Ridley

Link to Corporate Priority	Board/Partnership drawn from	Member Champion
Give easy, convenient access to quality public services	Efficiencies and Procurement	Humphrey Todd
	E-government	Duncan Read
	CPA	Chairman of Strategy Committee
	Equalities	David Wood
Raise individual and community ambitions and encourage active citizenship	Children and Young People	The appointment of a Member Champion in this area is recommended good practice.
	Haven Gateway	David Wood
	Arts and Culture	Sue Wigglesworth

Option 3

- 4.10 A member of Strategy Committee is made a 'Priority Champion'. The Priority Champion may also be a Member Champion on an area, and would co-ordinate the work of other champions sitting on bodies in their priority. This option would allow the greatest connectivity between Member Champions and Strategy Committee, something that does need to be strengthened. This option also provides the clearest link between the Council's priorities and the work of other outside bodies, and areas that are required to have a Member Champion and reporting back arrangements.
- 4.11 It is proposed that Option 3 is supported and presented to the first meeting of the new Council following the elections and after completion of the new Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan Working Group will be reporting, as part of the report of the out-going Council to the new Council, the work undertaken on the new Corporate Plan and any changes to the Corporate Priorities it feels the new Council may wish to consider. The role of the Priority Champions and their link to Member Champions should dovetail with this work.
- 4.12 At present, Member Champions receive no payment for undertaking the role other than the reimbursement of travel and subsistence. A review of Member Allowances has to take place prior to 30 April 2007 and it is proposed that consideration of a Special Responsibility Allowance for Member Champions be considered as part of the Independent Review Panel's remit.

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