

## Member Champions

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260205 or Sharon Lloyd, Corporate Services Manager, on 01743 260210.

#### 1 Purpose of Report

This report asks Members to agree that officers carry out a fundamental review of Member Champion roles and bring back a report to the Fire Authority in due course, setting out their findings and proposals.

#### 2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to agree that officers carry out a fundamental review of Member Champion roles and report back to the Fire Authority in due course, setting out their findings and proposals for the way forward.

#### 2 Background

In May 2006 the Fire Authority established a number of Member Champions, which, it was felt at the time, would prove beneficial to the Authority and assist in providing comprehensive responses to the Key Lines of Enquiry for the Audit Commission's Use of Resources Assessment. The Fire Authority subsequently established additional Member Champions and agreed a reporting regime.

Member Champion reporting was discussed briefly at the Fire Authority meeting in February 2010, when it was agreed that the issue be considered in more detail by the Audit and Performance Management Committee. A report was brought to the May meeting of the Committee, which, in addition to examining the current Member Champion reporting regime, also advised of a fundamental review of Member Champion roles.

### **3 Member Champion Role**

Whilst preparing the report for the Audit and Performance Management Committee the Corporate Services Manager discussed the Member Champion reporting regime with several Member Champions and senior officers. Those discussions were not limited to reporting but widened out to encompass the role of Member Champions.

The Member Champion for Risk Management and Audit, who is also the Member Champion for Equality and Diversity, felt that, for some Members, there might be difficulty in determining what they can actually achieve in their role. For others, such as her, there is engagement in various officer groups, for instance the Risk Management Group, Health and Safety Committee and Equality and Diversity Steering Group, which enables them to make a meaningful contribution in those areas. This includes the fundamental purpose of the Member Champion role of promoting, encouraging, challenging and driving improvement.

Furthermore it was felt that, with the support of officers, some Member Champions would be able to be more outward looking and use their involvement to raise public awareness of significant issues. Their presentations to the Fire Authority could also be used for this purpose, as well as outlining what the Member Champion had achieved in the role. In addition, future major projects might be an area for involvement of a Member Champion, perhaps for a limited period until the project had been completed.

The Committee agreed that a fundamental review is required, particularly as under the current regime there is not always the opportunity for a Member Champion to add value as part of their role. There was also a suggestion that there could be a reduction in roles and areas covered.

### **4 The Way Forward**

As part of the review of the role of Member Champions officers will draw upon the experiences of its Brigade Managers' in Cheshire and Staffordshire Fire Authorities. They will examine what happens within Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils and consult with a number of Fire Authority Members. Officers also wish to await the review by each of the two Councils of the Local Strategic Partnership before reporting to the Fire Authority. This will ensure that future Member engagement is linked wherever possible to the Local Strategic Partnership, with the aim of streamlining the work of Members.

When all of the above information has been collated and considered, officers will bring a report to the Fire Authority, setting out their proposals.

### **5 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## 6 Legal Comment

The Fire Authority is not legally required to have Member Champions and neither is there a legal requirement regarding the reporting arrangements for such Champions, although this is considered to be good practice.

## 7 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and have decided that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising specifically from this report. An Equality Impact Assessment will, however, be completed when officers put forward their proposals, having conducted their review of Members Champion roles.

## 8 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

## 9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Area Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial		Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*
Integrated Risk Management Planning			