

Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 15 October 2025

Heading/Title: Changes to the Constitution – Codes & Protocols – Councillor Champions

Cabinet Member(s): Communications and Democracy (Councillor Sarah Jackson)

Director/Assistant Director: Governance (Melanie Wellman)

Author and Directorate: Andrew Melhuish (Democratic Services Manager – Governance Directorate)

Contact Details andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk

Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan N/A

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Report Summary and Recommendations/Decision

The report includes an update on amendments to the Council's Constitution following a review of the Constitution by the Constitution Working Group.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution Full Council is responsible for the changes to the Constitution.

This part of the Constitution has been updated to include a list of current Councillor Champions following the addition of a Councillor Champion for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity. Minor changes have been made to include Councillor replacing Members.

The Councillor Champion Protocol has been considered by the Constitution Working Group and it is recommended that Council approves them.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Council:

1. Approves the Codes & Protocols – Councillor Champions to be included in the Council's Constitution.
2. Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communications and Democracy to make any minor drafting changes to the Councillor Champion protocol prior to publication on the Council's website.

1. Background

Updating of the Constitution

- 1.1 The Constitution Working Group has been carrying out a phased review of key elements of the Constitution over a series of working group meetings.
- 1.2 The Constitution Working Group was set up in 2024 at Annual Council to review the Constitution. The Constitution Working Group is a cross-party membership consisting of:

Councillor Sarah Jackson (Chair & PFH for Communications & Democracy), Councillors Paul Arnott, John Loudoun, Tim Dumper, Mike Goodman, Jenny Brown, Mike Howe, Peter Faithfull and Kim Bloxham and officer support is provided by the Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Team.
- 1.3 This part of the Constitution has been updated to include a list of current Councillor Champions following the addition of a Councillor Champion for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity. Minor changes have been made to include Councillor replacing Members.
- 1.4 The revised Protocol is set out at Appendix A, with tracked changes.

2. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 2.1 It is important that the Council's Constitution is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and meets the Council's requirements.
- 2.2 This report recommends the approval of the Councillor Champion Protocol which sets out the responsibilities, expectations and reporting requirements for Councillor Champions.

3. Options

- 3.1 As this is a requirement of legislation and the Council's Constitution no other options were considered.

4. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- ☒ A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure.
- ☒ A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.

- ☒ A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- ☒ A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services.

Having an up-to-date Constitution ensures the Council is able to support its Council Plan and priorities through the governance arrangements set out in the Constitution.

5. Financial Comments/Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the budget for allowances payable to Councillor Champions is from within existing budgets.

6. Legal Comments/Implications

- 6.1 Under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council is required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing the standing orders of the Council and such other information as is required or desirable.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 It is important that the Council keeps its Constitution up to date to reflect best practice and any changes in legislation.

8. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

- 8.1 No specific negative equalities implications have been identified with the proposals set out in the new Constitution. Decisions taken by the Council, in accordance with its Constitution, will consider equalities implications and have due regards to its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The arrangements for committee meetings will take full consideration of equalities and public accessibility requirements. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this decision as there are no direct impacts.

9. HR and Workforce Implications

- 9.1 There are no HR and Workforce implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

10.2 Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

- 10.1 There are no Community Safety Implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

11. Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 There are no Climate Change implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 12.1 There are no public health, health and safety or health and wellbeing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
- 12.2 There are no safeguarding issues that may arise from the recommendations in the report.

13. Procurement and Social Value implications

- 13.1 There are no procurement and social value implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

14. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

- 14.1 There are no land and buildings/asset management implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

15. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

- 15.1 N/A.

16. Digital and Data

- 16.1 N/A

17. Consultation and Engagement

- 17.1 Consultation on the proposals from the Constitution Working Group has been undertaken with the Group Leaders and the Standards Committee.

18. Communications

- 18.1 Subject to approval by full Council the Council's website will be updated.

19. Next Steps

- 19.1 To update the Council's website to reflect the recommendations arising from this report.

20. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Codes & Protocols: Councillor Champions

21. Background Papers

- 21.1 None.

APPENDIX 1

Part 5 Codes and Protocols

5.6 ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion Protocol

1 Introduction

- 1.1 ~~Member Councillor~~ Champions exist to provide a voice for traditionally underrepresented groups, or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of council business although they may not be the responsibility of any individual or committee and / or which may cross a number of different areas.
- 1.2 ~~Member Councillor~~ Champions are elected councillors (but not a Cabinet Member / Assistant Portfolio Holder) who will seek to make sure that their area of interest is taken into account when Council policy is being developed and decisions taken.
- 1.3 Council, on the advice of Cabinet, will decide on what areas of interest to have ~~Member Councillor~~ Champions for and who the appointees shall be. Appointments will be made at Annual Council and while changes can be made each year the expectation is that appointees will be appointed for a minimum of 2 years to ensure continuity in the role.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 Within the context of the powers of the Council and having regard to the Council's overall corporate priorities, the ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion will:
 - 2.1.1 Make sure that their area of interest is taken into account when the Council is developing policy or making decisions and exert influence in that regard.
 - 2.1.2 Act as a catalyst for change and improvement including working with national and local initiatives relevant to their area.
 - 2.1.3 Ask questions about performance and resourcing for their area.
 - 2.1.4 Raise the profile of their area within, and outside, the Council.
 - 2.1.5 Promote good practice within the Council and make the authority aware of good practice from elsewhere.
 - 2.1.6 Engage with, and exert influence on, external partners and bodies who work in the area including sharing good practice where appropriate.
 - 2.1.7 Engage with other councillors, officers and community groups who have an interest / stake in the area.
 - 2.1.8 Keep up-to-date with all relevant matters connected with the area and pursue relevant personal development and training opportunities.

3. Mutual Expectations

- 3.1 The Council is empowering a ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion and therefore will put in place such arrangements as it considers appropriate to support the ~~Member Councillor~~ Champion – this includes access to information held by the Council relating to their area and access to a reasonable amount of Officer resources (provided work priority of Officers

is not prejudiced).

3.2 The Council expects ~~Member~~ **Councillor** Champions to act reasonably when carrying out their role and recognise, and work effectively within, the political management and corporate working arrangements of the Council.

3.3 A ~~Member~~ **Councillor** Champion cannot take decisions. Otherwise the ~~Member~~ **Councillor** Champion may take all reasonable actions judged by the councillor as being necessary to perform their role including engaging with the media to confirm a Council position as stated in published policy or expressing a personal view in their capacity as the ~~Member~~ **Councillor** Champion.

4. Reporting

4.1 ~~Member~~ **Councillor** Champions shall provide a written report to Annual Council on work achieved during the year and identifying priorities for the future.

5. Current ~~Member~~ **Councillor Champions**

- Armed Forces Covenant
- Arts & Culture
- Mental Health
- Safeguarding
- Sports & Leisure
- **Equality, Inclusion & Diversity**