

Background – Armed Forces Champion

The Armed Forces Community Covenant, to which the City Council is a co-signatory, was published on 29 June 2012. The Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the local communities of Worcestershire, represented by the Worcestershire Partnership, and the local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

In support of the Community Covenant the Council appoints an Armed Forces Champion and a representative to the West Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.

The role of the Champion is to uphold the aims of the Community Covenant by encouraging local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their area, to nurture understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces community and to ensure that current and former members of the Armed Forces are not disadvantaged as a consequence of their membership of the Armed Forces.

The Council has established a reserve of £5,000 to help support local activities and initiatives that further the aims of the Covenant and improve the relationship between the Council and the local Armed Forces Community. Proposals for allocations from the fund are considered by the Armed Forces Champion in consultation with the Corporate Director - Finance and Resources.

Background – Heritage Champion

About three-quarters of all local authorities have a Heritage Champion, responsible for promoting the role of the historic environment within its administrative area.

In order to raise awareness of the historic environment's importance and potential across all of the local authority's functions, it is important to be able to express its values and its potential role in achieving the wider objectives of the authority.

The role of heritage in the city is formally recognised in the City Plan. The Heritage Champion is expected to make the case for the historic environment and to demonstrate the opportunities for heritage to play an increasingly more important role in the objectives of the City Council.

Background – Children and Young People's Champion

At its February 2021 meeting, Council supported a Motion which proposed that all Council policies and decisions will be assessed for their impact on children and young people. The Motion also proposed that the strategic assessment of play and leisure opportunities for children and young people currently being prepared by officers, will consider the whole city and bring forward recommendations to address any gaps in provision.

In accordance with the Motion, the Council agreed to appoint a Children and Young People's Member Champion with a remit that includes an annual report to Council on how the City Council is meeting its commitment to children and young people.

Background – Equalities and Diversity

At the meeting on 22nd March 2022, the Policy and Resources Committee considered a proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Annual Action Plan. The Committee approved both the proposed Strategy and Annual Action Plan.

The Strategy sets out arrangements for Member oversight and sponsorship of this work programme, including a proposal for a new Member Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This Champion will act as a sponsor of the improvement actions set out in the Strategy and raise the profile of this work, particularly with other councillors.

Their role will be to promote the importance of the Strategy across the Council's other Committees and with councillors generally. The Member Champion will also offer support and challenge to the lead officers in the Council responsible for delivering the Strategy and the Action Plan.

Background – Personal Safety and Civility

At the meeting on 5 March 2024, the Standards Committee considered a report on Personal Safety and Civility. The Committee discussed a number of matters relating to civility and respectful debate in public life as well as related to the personal safety of councillors and officers.

A number of actions were agreed for the Monitoring Officer to progress, with the Standards Committee overseeing this as a standing agenda item at future meetings. One of the actions was the establishment of a Member Champion for Personal Safety and Civility.

Council on 26 March 2024 Council agreed a new Member Champion role, specifically for Personal Safety and Civility, which would enable a councillor to work on a cross party basis, giving some focussed leadership to this vital topic and bringing in best practice from other organisations as appropriate.

The Member Champion would not be expected to provide advice on how to manage specific personal safety issues or incivility, but they would, for example, be expected to talk to councillors and officers to build up a good picture of trends and common themes, supplementing the incident data that is reported to the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee quarterly. The Member Champion role would also add weight to the voice of the Council when officers are trying to escalate concerns with other agencies and join in with local or national campaigns.