

# City of Edinburgh Council

10.00am, Thursday, 22 June 2023

## Elected Member Champions

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| Executive/routine<br>Wards<br>Council Commitments | Routine<br>All |
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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 To note the review of the elected member champion role from the previous administration.
- 1.2 To agree the recommended streamlined champion roles, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

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Executive Director of Corporate Services

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## Elected Member Champions

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report reviews the position of the elected member champions from the previous administration and recommends a streamlined number of champion positions in Appendix 2.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 From June 2012, the Council appointed individual elected members to serve as lead member and champion for a subject matter. There were nine previous Champions for the following areas: Canal; Carers; Equalities and Third Sector; Festival and Events; Play; Sustainability; Veterans; Volunteering Ambassador; and Digital Economy.
- 3.2 In [August 2017](#), the number of champions was increased from nine to 13, with six additional champion positions created (para 4.1).
- 3.3 The 2017 report detailed the roles and responsibilities of champions as follows:
- 3.3.1 Act as an ambassador for their specified area, which includes taking responsibility for maintaining and raising the profile of their area;
  - 3.3.2 Support the work of the committee conveners through working in a collaborative role and feeding into the decision-making role of the relevant conveners;
  - 3.3.3 Contribute to the development of policy in Edinburgh of their area and providing leadership and guidance when required;
  - 3.3.4 Act as a local expert and advocate working with and engaging with communities across the city; and
  - 3.3.5 Ensure focus is maintained on achieving the desired objectives and outcomes of their area.
- 3.4 In [August 2018](#) the Cycling Champion role gained an expanded remit and was amended to that of Active Travel Champion.
- 3.5 In [August 2021](#) an additional champions role was created – that of the Older People's Champion.

- 3.6 It was agreed in [December 2020](#) that elected member champions would report to their corresponding executive committee on an annual basis via the business bulletin.
- 3.7 At a meeting of the Council on [27 October 2022](#) a motion by Councillor Fullerton was amended and approved which agreed that elected members who served as champions in the last Council term should provide a report of their activities and achievements from their role as champion. A report would then be submitted back to Council setting out recommendations on which champion roles should be retained, created or removed.

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 There are currently 14 champions positions. Each position and their remit is detailed below:

|   | Champion Area                                 | Remit   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Active Travel Champion                        | Act as the Council's champion for the cycling network and active travel across the region.  |
| 2 | Built Environment and Sustainability Champion | Work with the sustainability partnership to champion Edinburgh as a leading city on sustainability in terms of economic, environmental and social issues.   |
| 3 | Canal Champion                                | Champion the development, maintenance and repair of canals throughout the city and the region.  |
| 4 | Carers Champion                               | Act as the champion for Carers and their families throughout the city.  |
| 5 | Child Poverty Champion                        | Champion the Council and our partners' response to child poverty and improving the support provided to families.  |
| 6 | Equalities Champion                           | Champion the outcomes of the Equalities Act and protected characteristics.  |
| 7 | Festivals Champion                            | Support the work of the Culture and communities committee and in relation to the city's festivals. Specifically work with the literature institutions and festivals to maximise the City's literary status and presence in all our communities. |
| 8 | Gaelic Language Champion                      | Champion the Gaelic language improve access for residents and communities.  |
| 9 | Homelessness Champions                        | Champion the Council's response and report for people who are homeless across the city.   |

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|----|-------------------------|---|
| 10 | Older People            | ensuring older people's perspectives are understood in every policy area, feeding back on older people's concerns to the council, leading on council campaigns around older people's issues and helping to communicate council policy to older people and the wider community |
| 11 | Small Business Champion | Act as the champion for small businesses and start-ups in the region and lead the support for future enterprises.   |
| 12 | Veterans' Champion      | Act as the city's champion for veterans' support.   |
| 13 | Volunteering Ambassador | Champion volunteering across the city to support people to make a real difference in their communities  |
| 14 | Young People Champion   | Engage with Young Edinburgh Action, youth forums across the city and Scottish Youth Parliament to champion issues raised by young people.   |

- 4.2 In order to establish whether or not elected members and the Council as a whole benefitted from their appointment to additional roles such as champion positions, feedback was sought directly from those who had participated. A list of the champions and corresponding executive committees is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.3 On 4 November 2022 a link to a survey was circulated to all of the returning elected members who had served as champions in the previous term which asked them to reflect on the time spent in their role, the organisations they had liaised with, the benefits and achievements gained, and whether they felt that it had been a worthwhile experience.
- 4.4 Only six responses to the survey were received and therefore it is difficult to gauge the full extent of the benefits that the champions roles create, whether there is any significant overlap with existing convener positions, and whether these roles are still fulfilling the aims they set out to do when first established.

#### Survey Feedback

- 4.5 In terms of survey feedback, elected members raised a number of benefits to the Council that the role of champion offered, including:
- They allowed for the building of relationships with a significant number of external organisations including public sector, voluntary, business, higher education and community groups.
  - They raised awareness amongst elected members of needs for policy focus and were able to influence policy change to support vulnerable people in the city.

- They reflected the needs and expectations of a specific section of Edinburgh's population and gave these groups a voice within the Council.
  - Without a champion to raise awareness across the Council, specific issues could get lost.
- 4.6 Five out of six respondents to the survey felt that serving as an elected member champion had been a worthwhile experience and that it was a separate and distinct role from that of a convener.
- 4.7 A key objective identified in the existing remit of a champion was to act as an ambassador, raising the profile of the area, and working and engaging with the community. The range of initiatives utilised to do this included events, tv and press coverage and promotion on social media.
- 4.8 The elected member champions all acknowledged the links they had established with a significant number of external organisations including public sector, voluntary, business, higher education and community groups. These networks provided a forum for councillors and external groups to work together to collectively influence change and share best practice.
- 4.9 Some champion roles have a clear focus on strategic or policy change such as the Homelessness and Gaelic Language roles. These are aided by a strong link with a Council group or committee. Other roles concentrated more on awareness building and discussions within the community. What is the appropriate focus for each champion should be driven by the champion themselves and how they feel the role should be taken forward.
- 4.10 Following on from this, in terms of how the role could be improved it was suggested that if there were outcomes and goals set it could then be determined if specific targets were being achieved. It was felt that clarity of purpose was required going forward to ensure effectiveness. This could be set by the appropriate executive committee and ensure there are strong links between the role of the committee and the relevant champion.

### Champion Roles

- 4.11 The feedback from previous champions has indicated that champion roles have provided some value for the Council, but in order to do so effectively going forward, it needs to be a focused, supported role with clear objectives and links within the Council. These roles can bring additional capacity and flexibility in approach and to highlight key policy areas of importance, but it is important that these roles are specific and distinct from the existing roles of elected members.
- 4.12 Moreover, consideration should also be given to the resource implications of the champion role, both on officer and elected member time. If the work of the champion could be undertaken by the relevant committee or is a role that all elected members promote as part of their duties then there may be no requirement for a champion in this area. As a result, each champion role as outlined under paragraph 4.1 has been considered to determine whether it is the most appropriate way to meet the Council's objectives in that area.

- 4.13 A list is provided in Appendix 2 of the officer recommendations for which roles should be continued into this Council term, based on the survey feedback and consideration of the existing remits of committee conveners. Six distinctive champion roles have been identified, streamlining the number down from the previous 14, and the Council are now invited to consider these champion roles.
- 4.14 Where there has been no feedback received on a champion role, either because the previous champion has not returned as an elected member, or because there has not been engagement with the survey, it has been considered whether the scope of the role is significant in relation to the remit of the correlating committee convener.
- 4.15 The Council are recommended to consider these champions roles, their remits, and how these should be taken forward into the new administration.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Elected members to make appointments to the champion roles following decision of the report. Consideration to be taken in how these roles should be taken forward with champions driving the objectives and outcomes.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 There are no direct financial impacts as a result of this report.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 Stakeholder and community engagement is a key part of this role.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 [Appointments of members to Committees, Boards and Joint Boards – City of Edinburgh Council May 2017](#)
- 8.2 [Elected Member Champions – The City of Edinburgh Council – 28 September 2018](#)
- 8.3 [Elected Member Champion – Older People – The City of Edinburgh Council – 26 August 2021](#)
- 8.4 [City of Edinburgh Council – Minute of 10 December 2020](#)
- 8.5 [City of Edinburgh Council – Minute of 27 October 2022](#)

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 – List of Champions and Corresponding Committees
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Recommendations of Continuing Champion Roles

**THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL****CHAMPIONS**

|   |                                       |   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Active Travel Champion                        | Councillor Child                      | Transport and Environment Committee           |
| Built Environment and Sustainability Champion | Councillor Gordon                     | Policy and Sustainability Committee           |
| Canal Champion                                | Councillor Key                        | Transport and Environment Committee           |
| Carers Champion                               | Councillor Griffiths                  | Policy and Sustainability Committee           |
| Child Poverty Champion                        | Councillor Day                        | Education, Children and Families Committee    |
| Equalities Champion                           | Councillor Gordon                     | Policy and Sustainability Committee           |
| Festivals Champions                           | Councillors Wilson and McNeese-Mechan | Culture and Communities Committee             |
| Gaelic Champion                               | Councillor Macinnes                   | Education, Children and Families Committee    |
| Homelessness Champion                         | Councillor Kate Campbell              | Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee |
| Older People                                  | Councillor Fullerton                  | Policy and Sustainability Committee           |
| Small Business Champion                       | Councillor Cameron                    | Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee |
| Veterans Champion                             | Councillor Frank Ross                 | Policy and Sustainability Committee           |
| Volunteering Ambassador                       | Councillor Frank Ross                 | Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee |
| Young People's Champion                       | Councillor Bird                       | Education, Children and Families Committee    |

Appendix 2

|   | <b>Champion Recommendation</b>   | <b>Reasons</b>   |
|---|--|--|
|   | <p><b>Active Travel Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: not continued</p>                        | <p>It is proposed that this role could be carried out by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee as the cycling network and active travel across the region is a fundamental part of their role.</p>   |
|   | <p><b>Built Environment and Sustainability Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: not continued</p> | <p>This post was held by a non-returning councillor. This role can be covered by having a Sustainability Champion position and is also part of the Planning Convener's role.</p>   |
|   | <p><b>Canal Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: not continued</p>                                | <p>Feedback indicated that this role could be carried out by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee and was not distinctive enough to be a separate role. It is also predominantly the responsibility of Scottish Canals.</p>   |
| 1 | <p><b>Carers Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: continued</p>                                   | <p>Achievements have been made in the previous administration such as helping to secure £250k funding for Carers Recovery following Covid, working with VOCAL to develop a process for carers to apply for small grant, promotion of activities and events.</p> <p>Feedback indicated this role was important in raising awareness across the Council of carers' issues.</p> |
|   | <p><b>Child Poverty Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: not continued</p>                        | <p>Feedback indicated that this role could be carried out by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee.</p>   |
|   | <p><b>Equalities Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: not continued</p>                           | <p>It is proposed that this role could be carried out by the Convener of the Policy and Sustainability Committee to promote the outcomes of the Equalities Act and protected characteristics.</p>  |

Appendix 2

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|   | <p><b>Festivals Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: not continued</p>      | <p>It is proposed that this role could be carried out by the Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee as a fundamental part of their role is to promote the Council's activities in relation to culture and the arts.</p>   |
| 2 | <p><b>Gaelic Language Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: continued</p>    | <p>Feedback indicated that it is important that Gaelic language is represented within the Council and that the Council reflects the needs and expectations of a specific section of Edinburgh's population.</p>  |
|   | <p><b>Homelessness Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: not continued</p>   | <p>It is recommended that this is no longer required as the functions can be fulfilled by the Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work who also chairs the Homelessness Task Force.</p>   |
| 3 | <p><b>Older People Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: continued</p>       | <p>The Champion role has been involved in discussions with Customer to ensure active progress on digital exclusion, promoted development of non-digital routes to awareness of social security awareness, facilitated discussions between Age Scotland and the Council.</p> <p>Feedback indicated this role was important in sharing Older People's issues with the Council and in leading networks and working towards solutions.</p> |
| 4 | <p><b>Small Business Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: continued</p>     | <p>The pandemic has had a significant impact on the city's small business and therefore it is recommended that there remains a champion to give voice to Edinburgh's small businesses and start-ups.</p>   |
|   | <p><b>Sustainability Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation: not continued</p> | <p>It is proposed that this role could be carried out by the Convener of the Policy and Sustainability Committee as their role already entails working with the Sustainability Partnership to champion Edinburgh as a leading city on sustainability in terms of economic, environmental and social issues, in commitment with Edinburgh's 2030 Net Zero target.</p>   |

Appendix 2

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|   | <p><b>Veterans' Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation:<br/>not continued</p>  | <p>It is proposed that this role could be carried out by the Lord Provost to act as the city's champion for veterans' support.</p>  |
| 5 | <p><b>Volunteering Ambassador</b></p> <p>Recommendation:<br/>continued</p> | <p>This role would champion volunteering across the city to support people to make a real difference in their communities.</p>  |
| 6 | <p><b>Young People Champion</b></p> <p>Recommendation:<br/>replace</p>     | <p>This post was held by a non-returning councillor. Given the overlap with the convener, this work could be carried out by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee and is not distinctive enough to be a separate role.</p> <p>It is proposed that this role is replaced by a <b>Corporate Parenting Champion</b> – they would be the champion for our children across the organisation not just within Education and Children's services and help the Council deliver the Promise and the relevant statutory duties in this area</p> |