

## **Member Advocates**

### **What are they?**

The Council has a scheme for appointing a number of Councillors to be advocates for certain interests within the Council and in the community.

### **What do they do?**

Advocates are primarily to advocate the needs of their particular "interest" area. They do not have decision making powers.

The Member Advocate will provide a brief description (*as a guide - no more than 50 words*) for the Annual General Meeting in May each year about the work they have done in their role in that year, in agreement with the Cabinet member.

### **How do they work?**

The Advocate;

- will work co-operatively with the relevant Cabinet member, meeting regularly with them and providing quarterly reports to them;
- will review previous Advocates' reports for guidance;
- will liaise with other advocates working on related issues;
- needs an up to date understanding of Council and partner issues affecting their "interest";
- cannot commit the Council or work outside the political management or executive arrangements;
- will work to promote their "interest" within and with the community
- will provide advice as required;
- should/could be a nominated Council representative on a relevant outside body;
- can attend relevant conferences relating to their "interest" subject to the prior approval of their Group Leader and in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member;
- is not a media contact and will not use the Advocate role as a platform to promote party political policies;
- will respect the confidentiality of any non-public information/briefing they receive in the course of their duties;
- does not receive an allowance for this role.

### **Officer information and advice**

To perform their role effectively, the Advocate;

- can liaise with the relevant Cabinet Member and Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel Chair(s)
- must work through/report back through a nominated lead Director

- will monitor relevant planned decisions, making use of the tools provided through the Councillors' intranet dashboard.
- receive briefings from officers as appropriate

Officers are advised to consider this role when they brief members on relevant topics. There is not an automatic right of attendance by the Advocate during such discussions but, given the role vested in them by the Council, there are certain expectations on the Advocate about being "kept in the loop" on relevant issues.

The roles are for one year and to be reviewed/reappointed at each Council AGM within a 4 year term.