



## **TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday 24 July 2024**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>APPOINTMENTS OF MEMBER CHAMPION FOR HERITAGE AND TO BIRKENHEAD PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF LAW AND CORPORATE SERVICES</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to enable the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee to appoint a Member Champion for Heritage and also to review the continuing need for the Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee and to appoint Members and named deputies to serve on those for the 2024/25 municipal year.

The report supports the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27, specifically Delivery theme 6: Safe, resilient and engaged communities.

The report effects the Birkenhead and Tranmere Ward. It is not a key decision.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Committee is recommended to -

1. appoint a Member Champion in relation to matters concerning the Borough's heritage;
2. authorise the Monitoring Officer as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership of the Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee and to appoint those Members in accordance with the rules on political balance, with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members; and
3. give consideration to the proposal to appoint a cross party group of Members to conduct a policy development review in accordance with the approach outlined at appendix 1 of the report.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

#### Member Champion for Heritage

- 1.1 In accordance with the Constitution (Part 3 (Section B)) Council and Committees may approach individual Members to take on a specific role to highlight and enhance an area of that Committee or the Council's terms of reference:
- a) The Council or Committee holding the corresponding functions within its terms of reference may appoint a Member Champion from one of their number. This may be the Chair or any other member of the Committee.
  - b) Where the subject of a Member Champion covers functions across the terms of reference of more than one Committee, the Committees may jointly appoint the Member Champion from either of their Committees' number.
- 1.2.1 The role of a Member Champion is to become a focus for the Council and Committee, partners, stakeholders and communities in order to:
- a. Raise the profile of that highlighted area of the Council and Committee's functions, and in conjunction with the relevant Member(s), officers and partner(s), support community engagement activities and other related publicity campaigns;
  - b. Liaise with Members, public sector partners and other stakeholders to promote key initiatives (as appropriate and required);
  - c. Act as an advocate for that highlighted area of the Council and Committee's functions and be required to familiarise themselves with related matters;
  - d. Seek out and share best practice from other areas of the UK;
  - e. Periodically present reports to the members of their Committee or other committees (as necessary and requested) setting out the actions taken and how those actions have contributed to the success and promotion of that highlighted area of the Council and Committee's functions;
  - f. Present, as appropriate, research papers and suggest new initiatives and ideas relating to highlighted area of the Council and Committee's functions for consideration by the Committee(s) or Council.

## Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee

- 1.2 The Committee is required to appoint the membership of various advisory committees which fall under its remit at the start of each Municipal Year.
- 1.3 The key drivers for refreshing policy development work at Committees is the move to a Whole Council Election Scheme in May 2023 and the new four-year Council Plan agreed by Council on 4th December 2023. The Council Plan provides an opportunity to establish a new way of strategically 'working together' across the organisation to deliver the Council Plan vision '*working together to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities*' and the associated Council Plan enabling and delivery themes:

### **Enabling Theme:**

- Working together to create a more efficient, effective and accessible Council.

### **Delivery Themes:**

- Working together to improve early help for children and families.
- Working together to promote independence and healthier lives.
- Working together to deliver people-focused regeneration.
- Working together to protect our environment.
- Working together to create safe, resilient and engaged communities.

## **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Other options considered included alternative ways in which the Member Champion could operate and how they would be selected.
- 2.2 For the Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee, which is an advisory Committee called a Management Committee, potential options which the Committee could investigate, and potential consequences, include:
- 2.2.1 Not include Members on the Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee, but in view of the target of achieving World Heritage Status the involvement of Councillors is vital to ensure that the Council's aspirations as well as other Committee members are taken into account. The link back to the Council to explore options on practical and strategic matters, is valuable and the meetings provide a good steering group, sounding board and forum for open debate and exploration of barriers and opportunities. Having Councillors on the Advisory Committee can help resolve problems generally and with the potential lottery bid.
- 2.2.2 To vary the numbers or composition of Members. That is a decision that cannot be made by this Committee as that would require a change to the Council's Constitution.

## **Policy Development**

- 2.2 Potential options which the Committee could investigate, and potential consequences, include not conducting policy development work. However, policy development work is clearly contemplated by the Council's Constitution and not conducting this type of work can be viewed by the sector as being indicative of wider governance and service failure issues (it is also considered good practice). Given that the new Council Plan has now been approved, Members now have a clear strategic framework to conduct effective policy development work. It is important as it engenders transparency and enables the Council to be accountable to residents. It can help the Council achieve best value, support further improvement and best practice; and enable locally adopted, enforceable recommendations and policies which deliver better outcomes for the wider community.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### Member Champion for Heritage

- 3.1 Member Champions associated with the pledges of the Wirral Plan were created in 2015 to support Cabinet Portfolio holders and were brought to an end in 2019.
- 3.2 Champions for three specific areas, prompted by the involvement of outside agencies and requests, have existed for several years in respect of an Armed Forces Champion, Heritage Champion and the Domestic Abuse Champion.
- 3.3 With the introduction of the committee system, some roles will automatically continue or be subsumed into the chairing role, such as the Armed Forces Champion being the Mayor and the Risk Champion being the Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee. However, it falls within the terms of reference of the Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee to appoint a Heritage Champion.

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES**

- 3.4 Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee is an advisory and consultative body that was retained in 2023/24 to assist the Committee in its work, with the membership for 2023/24 for information. The Committee is comprised of 5 Members (2 Labour, 1 Conservative, 1 Green, 1 Liberal Democrat).

### **(i). Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee**

- 3.4.1 To advise the Council on all issues relating to and affecting Birkenhead Park. Comprised of Members, the Friends of Birkenhead Park group and some other interested individuals.

**2023/24 membership:**

Councillor George Davies

Councillor Helen Cameron

Councillor Allan Brame

Councillor Paul Jobson

Councillor Amanda Onwuemene

plus

Councillor Jerry Williams (ex officio member due to his role as Heritage Champion)

**Policy Development Work****Purpose**

- 3.5 The purpose of policy development work is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a thorough, targeted examination of the Council's service provision and procedures (or those services or activities carried out by external organisations which affect the Borough of Wirral or any of its inhabitants). However, it is not possible to examine every service or activity in detail, so it is important for the Policy and Service Committees to prioritise and plan its work programme for the year to be taken forward through the committee, or a dedicated task and finish group.

**Scope**

- 3.6 The Council's Constitution (Part 4, Section 4) states that the Policy and Services Committees are to adopt policy development working practices when undertaking their functions to review the Council's actions or to review or otherwise scrutinise outside bodies and processes. The Policy and Services Committees may conduct policy development to:
- Review decisions made or actions taken by the Authority in so far as they have a direct impact on the role or functions of the Committee and the Committee can make recommendations to the relevant Committee on policies, budget and service delivery.
  - Undertake reviews and make recommendations on services or activities carried out by external organisations which affect the Borough of Wirral or any of its inhabitants where this does not fall within the role or remit of another service committee or where it relates to cross cutting issues, including the review and monitoring of contractual and operational performance of shared service partnerships, joint ventures and outside organisations to which the Council makes a resource contribution, focusing on examination of the benefits of the Council's contribution and the extent to which the body concerned makes a contribution to the achievement of the Council's priorities as outlined in the Council Plan 2023 - 2027.

## Process

- 3.7 A suggested process for determining and prioritising policy development topics is outlined at Appendix 1. This includes:
- **Identify potential issues -**
    - Consulting with all Members of Policy and Service Committees, Senior Leaders and Council Officers.
    - Looking at Wirral Council Plan priorities, Directorate Business Plans, the Forward Plan of the Council, as well as the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
    - Considering events and decisions in the Council's calendar that could require an input from scrutiny, such as setting budgets.
    - Reviewing the Council's risk register - analysis of risk registers on an ongoing basis will mean that scrutiny can understand what the impacts might be if risks are likely to occur, and what steps can be taken to mitigate.
    - Evaluating previous Council performance and identifying any follow-up work required to previous scrutiny work.
    - Carrying out work to engage with local people, for example through surgeries, local media, opinion surveys and online forums.
    - Reviewing customer complaints to identify any reoccurring themes.
  - **Prioritise topics -** Identify and prioritise potential scrutiny topics, considering the resources they would require and the level of impact they could achieve.
  - **Plan policy development and scrutiny work -** Decide which policy topics to review and include them in the work programme.
  - **Review and evaluate -** Review progress and evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the value added.
- 3.8 For every item on the policy development work programme, it should be clear:
- What is the issue/activity/project under consideration?
  - What would the Policy and Service Committee be asked to do?
  - What are the reasons for/expected benefits of policy development in this area?
  - Strategic considerations (aligned to the new Council Plan and underpinning strategic framework).
  - Is there a specific deadline for the piece of work?

## 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is no allowance or other remuneration to be paid to Member Champions or appointees to Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee for performing the roles.
- 4.2 Expenses may be met for engagements with outside bodies or public occasions as approved by the relevant lead officer or the Committee and therefore there are no financial implications to this decision.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There is a requirement under the Council's Constitution to appoint Members to various panels, advisory committees and working parties which fall within the remit of each Committee.
- 5.2 In undertaking policy development work, the Committee shall have regard to the relevant Regulations, statutory and non-statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State and best practice as issued by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT; STAFFING AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 There are none arising directly from this report as the Member Champion and Advisory Committee are arranged and serviced using existing staff resources.
- 6.2 If any of the options in section 2 were progressed this may increase the resource implications.
- 6.3 Membership of the policy review can consist of cross-party representation based on individual interest in the policy development topic and availability to commit to policy development meetings.
- 6.4 If the Committee so wishes, support will be provided by the relevant Lead Director to identify topics that could benefit from policy development (linked to work already underway in the Directorates). An Officer Team relevant to the policy development topic selected will also be established to support Members to undertake the policy development review. This will consist of expertise from the relevant Directorate, Policy & Strategy support in relation to research development and to ensure strategic alignment (particularly through the new Council Plan), Democratic Services support to ensure policy development is captured through Committee work programming and project support as required.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

### Member Champion for Heritage

- 7.1.1 All relevant risks have been considered and the below working arrangements approved by Council;
  - a. Member Champions will liaise as required with the relevant officer lead and the Committee Chair and Spokespersons in relation to their role and activities.
  - b. The Member Champion will follow all appropriate and applicable Council working protocols for engaging with officers, stakeholders, and the public.

- c. The Member Champions shall not do anything that is contrary to or inconsistent with any decision or approach taken by the Committee(s) or the Council.
- d. Where there is any confusion or difference between the Member Champion views/proposed actions and that of the Committee, the Committee's view/position shall prevail.
- e. Member Champions shall seek advice and guidance from the Council's Senior Leadership Team if they are in doubt or confusion on any issue or matter.

### Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee

- 7.1 As these are non-statutory meetings, no risks have been identified from the recommendation. If other options were pursued there was a possibility that the work of the meetings would not be in line with the wider aims of this Committee and the Council.
- 7.2 As part of policy development work, Policy and Service Committees should consider what risks might arise from the implementation of any decisions. Analysis of risk registers on an ongoing basis will mean that policy development can understand what the impacts might be if risks are likely to occur, and what steps can be taken to mitigate those risks.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 It is for political groups to decide how they wish to allocate their committee places.

## **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 There are no direct equality implications from this report, though Member Champions will be expected to adhere to Wirral Council's legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work do not discriminate against anyone.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.



## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 It is important that Birkenhead Park is well managed and run to ensure the prosperity and continued popularity of the Park as a treasured local asset.

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## **APPENDICES**

None.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Previous reports on the appointment of panels, statutory / advisory committees and working parties and amendments made during the year and the Council's Constitution.

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Tourism Communities Culture and Leisure Committee</b>	<b>22 June 2023</b>
<b>Tourism Communities Culture and Leisure Committee</b>	<b>16 June 2022</b>
<b>Tourism Communities Culture and Leisure Committee</b>	<b>16 June 2021</b>