

# Report to Council

19 March 2024

<b>Subject:</b>	Performance Champions – Progress Report
<b>Director:</b>	James McLaughlin, Assistant Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Senior Lead Officer, Jane Alexander <a href="mailto:Jane_alexander@sandwell.gov.uk">Jane_alexander@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

## 1 Recommendations

For the reasons set out in the report, it is recommended that Full Council:-

- 1.1 Recognise the progress that the Performance Champions have made since June 2023; and
- 1.2 Endorse the Performance Champions' proposed next steps in further developing their work areas.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 When the new Performance Champion roles were agreed by Council on 7 June 2022, it was agreed that the Neighbourhoods and Lead Performance Champion would report to Full Council on the work of the Performance Champions.



### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>The role of the Performance Champions is to support Cabinet members to progress key areas across the Corporate Plan, helping to improve delivery across all the strategic outcomes of the plan.</p>
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### 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 On 7 June 2022, Council approved the establishment of the Performance Champion roles. Absorbing the previous Cabinet Advisor roles, the purpose of the Performance Champions is to provide alternative views, opinions and advice on wider, often cross-cutting issues and matters, to the Executive with a view to supporting and enabling more informed policy and strategy development. The roles enable Performance Champions to share their own experiences, areas of expertise and views/opinions from wider engagement they undertake in relation matters falling within the scope of each Performance Champion role.
- 4.2 The Performance Champions do not form part of the Executive. However, the Executive may seek their views and engage them in relation to relevant matter and issues so as that important insight, ideas, thoughts, and views can be harnessed when executive functions are considered.
- 4.3 Performance Champions provide an additional mechanism and opportunity for important views and opinions to be ascertained, in particular from the public, partners and stakeholders. This is in addition to the other functions, mechanisms already in place, such as the Council's Scrutiny function and arrangements, consultation arrangements and methodologies and the like.
- 4.4 In June 2023, the Leader re-aligned their responsibilities to support council commitments as follows:
- Neighbourhoods – Lead Champion – Councillor Maria Crompton
  - Safer Communities– Councillor Mohammed Jalal Uddin
  - Cleaner and greener – Councillor Harnoor Bhullar
  - Our Economy – Councillor Pam Randhawa



- External partnerships – Councillor Vicki Smith

## Description of role

4.5 The following role description for performance champions was agreed by Council in June 2023:

- A non-decision-making role that supports Cabinet to drive performance and promote continuous improvement in service delivery and the implementation of best practice.
- To promote and develop their responsible topic, raising awareness of council activity in the community and contributing to the Council's Corporate Plan and Vision 2030.
- Encouraging and supporting measures, initiatives and/or activities that raise greater awareness and involvement by local people and communities in Council decision-making.

4.6 The Performance Champions have spent much of their first nine months undertaking the following tasks:

- **Building working relationships** – with Cabinet members, officers, community groups and organisations, businesses, partner organisations, partnership groups
- **Understanding the challenges**- through these relationships, build the picture of the issues surrounding their topic area
- **Understanding the context** – what are we aiming to achieve in regard to that topic, what are the resource limits, what are the key messages to be taken to the community and partners
- **Capturing what is working well and not so well** – whether there is a gap between perception and reality. Capturing the successes that can be celebrated together
- **Capturing and feedback intelligence gathered** – make sure that all the intelligence gathered is captured and fed back to the Lead Performance Champion and relevant Cabinet member.

## Safer Communities – Cllr Mohammed Jalal Uddin

4.7 The Performance Champion for Safer Communities has been working productively with officers, members, partners, and residents on a regular basis to understand the community safety issues that are experienced in the borough.



## Progress

4.8 The following progress and activities are report –

- Meetings with Cabinet member for Public Health and Communities to identify focus of work – community safety in parks.
- Meetings with key officers to understand the initiatives underway to address resident safety and anti-social behaviour in our green spaces.
- Conversations with local residents to understand concerns about community safety in parks – for example with local residents at the Annual Eid prayer at Sandwell Valley, Birmingham & Sandwell Mela at the Victoria Park and members of Friends of Lewisham Park.
- Participation in Safer 6 campaign, where local residents, businesses and partners had the opportunity to express their views. Residents expressed their concerns that they do not feel safe or encouraged to use local park facilities due to issues such as lack of adequate lighting and police visibility in the parks during the winter period.
- Attended West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner Panel meetings to gain insight into current community safety issues, role of neighbourhood policing in tackling anti-social behaviour issues in green/spaces and parks for example, nuisance bikes.
- Meetings with local ward councillors to understand concerns in their areas.

## 4.9 Next Steps

Make recommendations to Cabinet Member/ scrutiny chairs with regard to:

- Install more visible signage in the parks across the borough to raise awareness of how to report ASB incidents. Such signage will also include information regarding penalties/consequences of ASB incidents, such as fines for dog fouling, BBQs/fires, Nuisance Bikes in the parks.
- Build infrastructure in our parks to support the use of deployable CCTV stock such as suitable lighting with columns that can house cameras. Any future improvements to lighting offers the option to look at lighting columns that can accommodate our deployable cameras and thus give the option for temporary deployable CCTV camera should the need arise.
- Identify hotspot areas across 6 towns to tackle issues more effectively by deploying resources where needed most by collaborating with key partners/stakeholders.



- Explore the feasibility of installing permanent CCTV cameras by entrances and exit ways as pilot for the identified hotspot areas.

## **Cleaner and Greener – Councillor Harnoor Bhullar**

4.10 The Performance Champion for Cleaner and Greener communities has been working with officers and members involved in addressing the key issues in relation to creating a cleaner and greener Sandwell and liaising with partners at the town level to understand the issues of concern locally.

### **Progress**

4.11 The following progress and activities are report –

- Meeting with Assistant Director Borough Economy to discuss learnings from Serco industrial action strike and how to tackle any similar situations in the future.
- Understanding about new introduction of charges regarding garden waste collection 2023 and start and end time period for collections. Also suggested putting a rolling Direct debit option for residents going forward so that residents do not have to go through the hassle of signing up every year and this leading to residents missing waste collections for a certain time period. Advised that work is already underway.
- Gained understanding of Sandwell street cleansing routines and suggested that this needs to be advertised more via various channels to the residents.
- Meeting with key officer responsible for a greener Sandwell to consider the tree strategy and the actions planned. Also discussed the ongoing works under tree strategy and the new changes being introduced.
- Attended Climate change meetings regularly and contributed actively. Main areas of interest for contribution - single use plastic, recycling and waste, community engagement, with adults and young people.

### **Next Steps**

4.12 Make recommendations to Cabinet Member/ scrutiny chairs with regard to:

- Initiate pilot urban greening project in Oldbury ensuring it benefits the community and is managed in such a way as to not put additional burden on council maintenance services



- Ensure consultation with local businesses/ friends groups and explore how they would like to be involved in the project
- Explore funding options for rolling out the approach to other towns

## **Our Economy – Cllr Pam Randhawa**

4.16 The Performance Champion for Our Economy has been working to build relationships with business in Sandwell to understand their needs and articulating these views in strategic meetings.

### **Progress**

4.17 The following progress and activities are report –

- Attending Business Ambassadors Focus Groups and engaging in discussion of the strategic issues affecting Sandwell businesses and the merits of developing our community wealth building approach.
- Meeting with Regeneration and Growth Cabinet member to discuss role and areas of focus.
- Various meetings with local businesses to explore the challenges they are facing and how we can work together and signposting to address specific issues that council can help with
- Monthly attendance at Business Ambassadors meeting, promoting work of the group with partners in the borough and feeding intelligence back to them
- Attended Care Leavers’ event run by Sandwell Childrens’ Trust, feeding intelligence back to Business Ambassadors
- Participated in Sandwell Anchor Network to develop Partnership Charter and agree with Business Ambassadors
- Attending member training on Introduction to Planning to broaden skills
- Encouraging nominations of local companies for Kings Honours and Awards – sharing criteria and eligibility information
- Contributed to Sandwell’s Cost of Living Summit to plan support for local communities and business
- Attended various events at the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool, enabling promotion of Sandwell business, networking and gathering of intelligence on business community issues nationally
- Attending West Bromwich Town Deal Board



- Attending West Bromwich Crime Reduction Partnership providing monitoring and update of issues relating to business
- Attended Sandwell Top 50 Business and Growth Team launch, promoting networking and access to support
- Contributed to partnership discussion on Vision 2030 refresh, ensuring that business community input is considered in the process.

### Next Steps

4.18 Make recommendations to Cabinet Member/ scrutiny chairs with regard to:

- Working with officers to improve how business take up Council contract opportunities.
- Continuing to build relationship with Business Ambassadors by attending meetings and bridging gap with the Council.

### External Partnerships – Cllr Vicki Smith

4.19 The Performance Champion for External Partnerships has been focusing on understanding the approach to social prescribing and how this can be developed and enhanced.

### Progress

4.20 The following progress and activities are report –

- Initial meeting with Cabinet member to understand focus required – external partnerships around health and wellbeing and social prescribing
- Meeting with key officers in the council who work directly on social prescribing to understand the context and key issues.
- Exploration of current approach and need for a Social Prescribing (SP) Strategy.
- Based on feedback from Social Prescribers and stakeholders, the strategy document provides recommendations to offer a more cohesive and integrated service offer for Sandwell. The strategy intends to move the social prescribing environment in Sandwell into a more cohesive, comprehensive and standardised intervention that will encourage alignment in addressing the wider determinants of health and help to reduce health inequalities in our communities.
- The Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2024 will be asked to provide strategic guidance on which option the operational team



should pursue to improve social prescribing in Sandwell and ensure that:

- Social Prescribing workers are well trained and supported.
- Referrals and data collection are aligned across all social prescribers regardless of setting.
- Social Prescribing reaches those individuals who need it in a timely manner and supportively.
- Community resources are accessible, and the community and voluntary sector infrastructure is developed to respond to social prescribing demand.
- The future strategy can be clearly communicated and implemented with appropriate plans and review.

### **Next Steps**

4.21 Make recommendations to Cabinet Member/ scrutiny chairs with regard to:

- To further engage with the development of the SP strategy and ensure that the delivery of SP is consistent across the six towns.
- Increasing awareness of SP in the community and feeding back experiences from the community.
- Increase the awareness and knowledge of elected members and recommend that member development training takes place to enable them to refer in the right way.

### **Lead Performance Champion - Neighbourhoods - Cllr Maria Crompton**

4.22 The Performance Champion for Neighbourhoods has been focusing on dementia in Sandwell. Also attending town leads meetings to pick up issues at that level. Role to report progress of performance champions to the Deputy Leader.

### **Progress**

4.23 The following progress and activities are report –

- Various meetings with officers, members and partners held relating to this performance area
- Meetings with two Deputy Leaders to ascertain focus required and keys areas to explore – care for dementia sufferers and their families in their home and in the community
- Attended Demetia Event Blackheath Library – Several services with information



- Attended Dementia workshop for Cabinet. Dementia service providers outlined the intelligence base and the services currently available and how these might be developed in the future:
  - Bespoke support tailored to the individual.
  - Clearer signage required in Council buildings & areas in Sandwell (colour important, particularly heritage signs).
  - Increased availability of respite for carers, especially for short periods. Better advertising.
  - Dementia specific training for all areas initially but refreshed every couple of years, including members.
- Making sure council buildings, staff and services are dementia friendly in the first place and then extend this intention to other organisations, shopping centres and businesses in Sandwell.
- Issues identified by families are that when dementia sufferers' care is required outside Sandwell, communication between services in the different areas is difficult.

### Next Steps

- 4.24 Make recommendations to Cabinet Member/ Scrutiny Chairs regarding:
- To follow up actions being taken to improve signage and communication both within council buildings and in other public buildings and green spaces
  - To focus on communication between different organisations that work together to support families experiencing dementia, ensuring the offer is improved. Particularly addressing the issue of cross boundary provision and communication between authorities and with the families involved
  - Greater digital communication e.g. Facebook to let residents know when and where events are taking place over a couple of weeks.
  - Organisation names more appropriate to the service they offer.
- 4.25 All Performance Champions will be considering the impact of the current fiscal environment and cost of living challenges on service provision in the future.

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Council could determine an alternative focus for the Performance Champion roles. However, these roles are focused on council commitments and alternatives may not be as effective in supporting Cabinet.



## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	None specifically associated with this report. The Independent Remuneration Panel previously recommended, and Full Council approved, a Special Responsibility Allowance of 33.3% of the Leaders allowance be paid to Performance Champions. Costs are met from within approved budgets.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	Whilst not part of the executive, the role of Performance Champion enables non-executive members to contribute, alongside the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function, to the direction of travel for the Council, shaping and influencing policy.
<b>Risk:</b>	None specifically associated with this report. However, Performance Champions may from time to time receive confidential, personal or sensitive information that will need to be managed in accordance with information governance obligations.
<b>Equality:</b>	Performance Champion will engage with a variety of people from different backgrounds. Ensuring such views are captured and considered is an important part of the role of Performance Champion.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	The remit of several of the proposed revised roles would contribute to the health and wellbeing of Sandwell's communities.
<b>Social Value:</b>	The remit of several of the Performance Champion roles contribute to enhancing social value.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	The remit of several of the Performance Champion roles contribute to addressing the causes of climate change.

## 7. Appendices

None



## 8. Background Papers

None.

