

Report to Council

13 December 2022

Subject:	Performance Champions – Progress Report
Cabinet Member:	Deputy Leader Councillor Bob Piper
Director:	Director of Law and Governance Surjit Tour
Key Decision:	No
Contact Officer:	Senior Lead Officer, Jane Alexander Jane_alexander@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations







- 1.1 That Council recognise the progress that the Performance Champions have made in the past six months.
- 1.2 That Council endorse the Performance Champions' 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 provide a bi-annual report to Full Council on the work of the Performance Champions.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

		The role of the Performance Champions is to support Cabinet Members to progress key areas across the Corporate Plan, helping to improvement delivery across all the strategic outcomes of the plan.
		
		

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 On 7 June 2022, Council approved the establishment of six 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 2022, the Leader aligned their responsibilities to support council commitments as follows:

- Safer Community – Councillor Richard McVittie
- Greener Community – Councillor Stephen Jones
- Cleaner Community – Councillor Elaine Costigan
- Our economy – Councillor Pam Randhawa
- External partnerships – Councillor Vicki Smith
- Neighbourhoods – Lead Champion – Councillor Maria Crompton

Description of role

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

- 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 six 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 Richard McVittie

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 crime and community safety issues that are experienced in the borough.

4.8 Progress

- Working with officers, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and partners to progress ASB taskforce pilot
- Exploring LGA training opportunities in regard to crime and community safety and attended LGA Conference at Warwick University.
- Sitting on PCC Panel and meeting PCC Simon Foster regularly. Meeting with the PCC and Assistant Police and Crime Commissioners to make sure that Sandwell has a platform on a regional stage to be part of the solution. These interactions have been very positive and are ongoing.
- Supporting development of a new Safer Sandwell Strategy by regularly meeting with officers responsible.
- Worked with officers to put training in place for councillors re ASB. Officers within Sandwell Council have been providing training to Councillors to allow them to have a better understanding when it comes to the impact of crime and ASB on residents. Councillors are the front line to residents and as public servants need are a useful resource in our localities to help where possible.
- Working with officers to review the approach to Safer 6. A comprehensive programme has been created to inform and educate the public to issues they may face. Working with partners and specialists locally to provide a joined-up approach to keep people safe across our 6 towns. Making sure Safer Six has a more robust offer to residents and working with officers to provide regular communication and updating our website and across social media to help make sure these messages are shared locally.
- Communicating progress to the Cabinet member for Communities.
- Conversations with officers to find way of promoting “Being a good neighbour” toolkit and possible funding sources.



4.9 Next Steps

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

- Setting up scrutiny sub-committee for youth commissioners to understand the impact of crime and ASB for young people in Sandwell.

Greener Communities – Cllr Stephen Jones

4.10 The Performance Champion for Greener Communities has been working with officers and members involved in addressing the causes of climate change and liaising with partners at the town level to understand the issues of concern locally.

4.11 Progress

- Meeting with the Climate Change Programme Manager to understand the key challenges to Sandwell and the Council to address the causes of climate change. These were identified as achieving net zero as an organisation by 2031, reducing the long term effects on resident health and wellbeing, developing sustainable modes of transport, implementing the regeneration pipeline of projects, sustainable heat sources for council buildings, electrification of council vehicles, planting 10,000 trees by 2030.
- Attended Climate Change Steering Group to contribute to strategic direction that the council takes with climate change. Issues highlighted included the need for cycles to be allowed on the metro and public transport, canal towpath improvements for cycling/walking, high rise flats having zero recycling.
- Attended Tipton local town members meeting – issue of cycles not being allowed on metro raised again.
- Attended Public Health Networking meeting – explored issues relating to increasing the use of cycling by those that experience barriers to using bikes e.g through disability or the cost.

4.12 Next Steps

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

- Meetings with officers to discuss how we are implement tree planting in the borough and achieving objectives.
- Exploring initiatives within the WM Combined Authority that can be progressed in Sandwell.



Cleaner Communities – Cllr Elaine Costigan

4.13 The Performance Champion for Cleaner Communities has been meeting with officers, partners and residents to understand how we measure performance, the issues being experienced on the ground and how we might further improve service provision.

4.14 Progress

- Meeting with Director of Borough Economy to understand the key issues affecting the cleanliness of the borough and how we are measuring performance. Part of this is understanding residents' views on cleanliness and comparisons with national averages. Our recent resident survey shows that satisfaction with the waste service is good and above the national average. Satisfaction with street cleansing was also slightly above the national benchmark.
- The improvement of information to the public is key, for instance publishing information online that explains the schedules for various cleansing regimes. Annual information is to go online for resident ease of access and profiles to ward councillors – gully cleansing schedules go live in November 2022. The importance of our relationship with Serco is key, working together with the public to address clean streets.
- Meeting with Litterwatch to discuss future plans with Serco and the key challenges faced.

4.15 Next Steps

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

- Sitting on board with Serco to input views as councillor from the community to see what we can do differently together.

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.



4.17 Progress

- 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
- Attended Meet the Buyer event to network with local businesses and help make introductions
- Attended West Bromwich BID Board updating on Sandwell projects.
- Attended Land Asset Management Committee exploring support for local business in identifying land and expansion opportunities
- Attended Strong and Inclusive Economy Board – a network of Anchor Organisations in Sandwell. Included discussion of Real Living Wage and local procurement to support the local economy.

4.18 Next Steps

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 council's relationship with the voluntary/community and faith sector and how this relationship can be enhanced.

4.20 Progress

- Meeting with key officers in the council who work directly with the voluntary and community sector to understand the context and key issues.
- Meeting with SCVO to understand their role and their perspective of the needs of the groups they support



- Meeting with Youth Service to understand provision being offered to young people and how needs are being met
- Visiting many community centres to understand their needs and challenges
- Meeting SCIPS to have an overview of the organisation and their role in tenant and resident engagement
- Meeting with Connexions to understand the provision of careers services for young people and referrals to other services and the challenges faced by the service
- Participated in a HAF session in Blackheath
- Meeting with Neighbourhood Engagement Officer to consider types of grant available in towns
- Working with officers on the launch of the warm spaces initiative and potential role of members as cost of living champions

4.21 **Next Steps**

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

- Attending Public Health Network meetings in each of the six towns and visiting those groups funded by us.

Lead Performance Champion - Neighbourhoods - Cllr Maria Crompton

4.22 The Performance Champion for Neighbourhoods has been focusing on dementia, holiday food vouchers for school children and community hubs. Also attending town leads meetings to pick up issues at that level. Role to report progress of performance champions to Deputy Leader.

4.23 **Progress**

- Various meetings with officers, members and partners held relating to this performance area
- Following recognition of lack of support for dementia patients. Initial meeting held to understand the scale of the need for dementia support. There are approximately 3700 people diagnosed with dementia in Sandwell. Support needs to come from a range of partner organisations including primary care, other health services, social care services and voluntary and community sector services. Next steps are to find out what services we currently offer and what improvements need to be made to



support residents and to feed findings back to Cabinet. Attended Sandwell Community Dementia Launch in November – included Agewell Dementia Pathfinders, St Albans, Age UK, BUDS linking together to provide joined up dementia support.

- Looking at food vouchers for children to tackle holiday hunger in the school holiday. Meeting held to ascertain current situation. Number of vouchers issued in 6 week holiday was 18,979. The aim was to find out how many vouchers were used and the impact of the scheme.
- Understanding how to improve local spend in Sandwell – Meeting with lead officer to understanding new procurement regulations and small local businesses can access the opportunities from council contracts. Data shows we already spend 58% within the West Midlands area. Will be exploring the impact of the new procurement changes and feeding findings back to Cabinet.
- Meeting with Town Leads has highlighted a growing issue of cars blocking the pavements, forcing pedestrians into the highway. Spoke to West Midlands Police who do not have the resources to address the issue. Exploring ways that My Sandwell could be used to post fixed penalties on illegally parked vehicles. Town Leads also identified the danger that electric scooters and bicycles are presenting to pedestrians on the footpath. Town Leads also expressed concern about the lack of coordination when allowing utilities to work on the highways.

4.24 Next Steps

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

- Meeting with all the organisations working together to support families experiencing dementia to ensure offer is improved.
- Exploring best practice in other local authorities.
- Exploring take up of food vouchers to address holiday hunger
- Examining how utilities coordinate work on the highways and how this can be improved, working with the Town Leads.

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

Resources:	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.
Legal and Governance:	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.
Risk:	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.
Equality:	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.
Health and Wellbeing:	The remit of several of the proposed revised roles would contribute to the health and wellbeing of Sandwell's communities.
Social Value:	The remit of several of the Performance Champion roles contribute to enhancing social value.
Climate Change:	The remit of several of the Performance Champion roles contribute to addressing the causes of climate change.

7. Appendices

None



8. Background Papers

None.

