

MEMBER CHAMPION FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY

To: **General Purposes Committee**

Meeting Date: **27th March 2018**

From: **Head of Transformation**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **Not applicable** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To propose the appointment of a Member Champion for Evidence-Informed Policy.**

Recommendation: **General Purposes Committee is recommended to approve:**

- a) the establishment of the role of Member Champion for Evidence-Informed Policy.**
- b) the appointment of Cllr Manning as Member Champion for Evidence-Informed Policy.**

<i>Officer contact:</i>		<i>Member contacts:</i>	
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2016/17, Cambridgeshire County Council ran a pilot series of 'Policy Challenges' with Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange (CUSPE), a student-run organisation for early-career researchers with an interest in public policy.

The pilot - which saw researchers get valuable and interesting experience and the Council get new ideas for policy formation backed by evidence - was instigated by Councillor Manning to increase the opportunities for collaboration at a local policy level. Councillors put forward a list of longstanding policy issues that the Council faces and these were then matched against the research interests of the applicants from CUSPE and developed into three research projects.

The main aim of the pilot was to strengthen relationships between Cambridgeshire County Council and the University of Cambridge by creating a space for academics and elected officials to collaborate and improve public policy through the more effective use of evidence and expertise.

Through doing so, the following aims also developed:

- the project would demonstrate the value that collaboration between academia and policy-making could hold on a local level (where other projects had focused on a national level);
- the project would create a wider awareness (within the University, Council and for the general public) of the value of evidence-informed policy;
- researchers would devise recommendations that could positively impact Council outcomes through the promotion of evidence-based policy making;
- researchers would gain a greater understanding of how academic research can be used in a "real-world" context and would gain experience of policy making.

Overall, the evaluative process found the 'Policy Challenges' pilot to have been successful in meeting these aims and the Councillors, officers and researchers involved recommend that the collaboration should be made formal and a Member Champion appointed to drive the work forward.

2. MEMBER CHAMPION ROLE

- 2.1 In order to carry the work forward to the next phase, it is recommended that the Council appoints a **Member Champion for Evidence-Informed Policy**. (It is recognised that this type of work is commonly referred to as "Evidence-Based Policy" however the evaluation group proposes that the word "*Informed*" more clearly indicates that evidence does not create policy – it suggests a direction for consideration at the political level.)
- 2.2 The Member Champion for Evidence-Informed Policy will have responsibility for:
- promoting the use and presentation of evidence and creating opportunities for fellow Councillors and officers to use that evidence in the decisions they make;
 - running future phases of the Policy Challenges programme, liaising with officers, committees and researchers and ensuring that there is a good resource/ results balance in all projects;
 - developing links which encourage collaboration, shape opportunities and identify funding for longer term/in depth research projects;

- curating topics for policy challenges and collating and sharing the knowledge, placing the County Council at the forefront nationally of evidenced policy making;
- championing Cambridgeshire County Council by finding and highlighting examples of use of evidence in current practice across the Council.

- 2.3 The role is non-political and is there to advocate the use and presentation of evidence, giving the opportunity for fellow Councillors and officers to use that evidence in the decisions they make. The role is not there to suggest policy design on the basis of that evidence. By its very nature the role is apolitical and the holder will be expected to adhere to this at all times whilst carrying out functions associated with it.
- 2.4 It is recommended that Councillor Manning should be appointed as the first Cambridgeshire County Council Member Champion for Evidence-Informed Policy, allowing him to build on existing relationships with the University of Cambridge, other such institutions in Cambridgeshire and the success of the pilot programme.
- 2.5 The recommended term of office for the role is one year.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Improving the depth and quality of knowledge used by policy makers is shown to influence the effectiveness of policies and a positive impact on all key priorities is expected as a result of this initiative.

- 3.1 **Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**
- 3.2 **Helping people live healthy and independent lives**
- 3.3 **Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Chris Malyon
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Paul White
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Officer: Virginia Lloyd
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Gwendolyn Casazza
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes: Name of Officer: Christine Birchall
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Gwendolyn Casazza
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Kate Parker

Source Documents	Location
CUSPE Pilot Evaluation Report	Transformation Service Network Folder