

Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	15 June 2022
Report Title	Creation and appointment of an access and disability Champion
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins – Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson – Head of Housing and Community Services
Lead Officer	Charlotte Hudson – Head of Housing and Community Services
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That the Council creates an Access and Disability Champion 2) That nominations are received at Council and a councillor elected to undertake the role.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Swale Borough Council is committed to working with residents and disability groups to ensure our services are accessible. There are several examples of the council listening and working with disabled residents and groups on specific policies such as our Housing Assistance Policy, however we haven't had a consistent political oversight of how our policies affect people with disabilities or a mechanism for politicians to work with residents with disabilities and groups representing people with disabilities to understand how we can improve access to services.
- 1.2 This report sets out a proposal to create and appoint an Access and Disability Champion.

2 Background

- 2.1 Although the council is committed to working with residents and groups representing disabled people, there has never been a single political oversight to ensure that the Council's policies, and services meet the needs of the whole community.
- 2.2 The creation of the Access and Disability Champion will ensure two things. Firstly, that all Council policies meet the needs of residents with disabilities. Secondly, to be a political link between the Council and disability groups.

- 2.3 The Council is committed to supporting all residents of the Borough and the appointment of an Access and Disability Champion would support the Council's aim.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 This proposal is for a new post of Access and Disability Champion to be created and members to elect a councillor to take this position. The position would not have any special responsibility allowance. The councillor would work to ensure that all Council policies meet the needs of businesses, visitors and residents in the borough who have a disability. The councillor will also work with officers to ensure that the Council is seeking and implementing best practice in relation to access and disability.
- 3.2 The Access and Disability Champion would also provide a member link between the Council and charities and groups working with and representing people with disabilities

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council does not create and appoint an Access and Disability Champion. This would reduce the formal links between residents, disability group and elected members and would not allow a single political overview of Access and disability issues within Council policies

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 There has been no formal consultation undertaken

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	This proposal would further the corporate plan's strategic objective 4.2 to "Ensure that all elected members are appropriately supported to lead and improve the council's engagement with its disparate geographic and demographic communities, and encourage especially the participation of underrepresented groups in the democratic process
Financial, Resource and Property	There are no financial, resource or property implications in this report.

Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The council has a statutory role under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The equality duty was developed to harmonise the equality duties and to extend it across the protected characteristics. It consists of a general equality duty, supported by specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation. In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act. • Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. • Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. <p>This proposal meeting the requirement of the PSED</p>
Crime and Disorder	There are no implications.
Environment and Climate/ Ecological Emergency	There are no implications.
Health and Wellbeing	There are positive health and wellbeing outcomes from this proposal which strives to listen and act up issues and concerns of disabled people.
Safeguarding of Children, Young people and Vulnerable Adults	There are no implications.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	There are no implications.
Equality and Diversity	As set out in the legal implications, the council as a duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The positive implications for equality and diversity are set out above.
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no implications.

7 Appendices

There are no appendices to this report

8 Background Papers

There are no background papers for this report.