

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCILGENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 14 MAY 2025COUNCIL – 21 MAY 2025Report by the Director of Law and Governance on proposed revisions to Article 7 and consequential amendments to the Members' Allowance SchemeSUMMARY

This report proposes revisions to Article 7 of the Council's Constitution to introduce Deputy Cabinet Members, who will assist Cabinet in the delivery of their agenda for change. It also proposes to remove provision for the appointment of Policy Champions. Additionally, this report sets out the proposed consequential changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The General Purposes Committee is recommended to recommend to Council to agree the:
 - i) amendments to Article 7 as detailed in paragraph 4
 - ii) consequential amendments to the Members' Allowances Scheme as set out in paragraph 5.

INTRODUCTION

2. The Council's Administration has identified five areas of focus in which additional support for the Cabinet will help them deliver on their agenda for change. It is proposed that this support is provided through five Deputy Cabinet Members (resident engagement, environment, housing, communities and health). It is proposed that they will hold responsibility to assist individual Cabinet Members on defined projects but where necessary will also work across portfolios to assist the Cabinet to deliver change for the Borough. This is to replace the existing Policy Champion roles, therefore the provision in the Constitution for Policy Champions will consequently be removed.
3. Deputy Cabinet Members are not members of the executive and therefore are not restricted from membership of overview and scrutiny committees; to ensure separation between work on specific projects that Deputy Cabinet Members will not sit on overview and scrutiny committees which have a remit that aligns with their deputy cabinet member responsibilities. Additionally, Deputy Cabinet Members will

not sit on the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee which deals with call-in requests.

4. Appointments will be made by the Leader of the Council.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO ARTICLE 7 OF THE CONSTITUTION

5. Following consultation with the Leader, the following changes are proposed to Article 7 of the Constitution:

7.07 Deputy Cabinet Members

Deputy Cabinet members are not a part of the Executive and cannot discharge any functions of the Executive. After consultation with Cabinet Members, up to a maximum of five Deputy Cabinet Members can be appointed by the Leader. Deputy Cabinet Members will work alongside Cabinet Members. Their appointments will be reviewed, as necessary by the Leader.

Cabinet Members will lead the change in their respective areas. They will be assisted by Deputy Cabinet Members on individual projects as well as more generally across work areas.

The following is a non-exhaustive description of the role Deputy Cabinet Members will perform in support of the work of individual Cabinet Members and the Executive overall:

- Take a lead on progressing specific projects agreed with the relevant Cabinet Members,**
- Under the direction of the relevant Cabinet Members, work directly with officers and stakeholders to help steer and enact the Council's policy priorities,**
- Contribute to policy development discussions • Raise awareness of and advocate for groups and/or issues relevant to individual projects and their broad area of responsibility in support of the work of the Executive within and outside of the Council,**
- Research best practice in other councils and examine the Council's internal processes relevant to individual projects and their broad area of responsibility in support of the work of the Executive to make recommendations to individual Cabinet Members or the Executive for improvement, and**
- Promote emerging Council projects on which they are assisting, locally and where relevant to a wider audience.**

The Leader will determine the subject matter that Deputy Cabinet Members will focus on during the period of their appointment. The Leader will notify the Chief Executive in writing of the appointment of Deputy Cabinet Members. Their appointment will take effect immediately upon receipt by the Chief Executive of the notice.

A Deputy Cabinet Member will hold office until:

- (a) he/she resigns from office; or**
- (b) he/she is suspended from being a Councillor under Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (although he/she may resume office at the end of the period of suspension); or**

- (c) he/she is no longer a Councillor; or
- (d) he/she is removed from office by the Leader who must give written notice of any removal to the Chief Executive.

The removal will take immediate effect after receipt of the notice by the Chief Executive. The Leader will fill any Deputy Cabinet Member vacancy arising by notifying the Chief Executive in writing of their appointment. Such appointments will take effect immediately upon receipt of the notice and the Chief Executive will report the change of Deputy Cabinet Member to the next meeting of the Council.

7.07 Policy Champions

~~Policy Champions are not a part of the Executive and cannot discharge any functions of the Executive.~~

~~After consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member sponsoring the role, up to a maximum of eight Policy Champions can be appointed by the Leader. Policy Champions will work alongside the Cabinet Member sponsoring their role and will support the work of the Cabinet. Appointments will be reviewed, as necessary.~~

~~Cabinet Members will lead the change in their respective areas. They will be assisted by any Policy Champions appointed to support their role. The following is a non-exhaustive description of the roles Policy Champions will perform in support of the work of their sponsoring Cabinet Member:~~

- ~~• Work with Cabinet Members as well as with Council officers to maintain visibility of issues relevant to their area of responsibility,~~
- ~~• Raise awareness of and advocate for groups and/or issues relevant to their area of responsibility within and outside of the Council,~~
- ~~• Research best practice in other councils, subject specific national groups, and examine the Council's internal processes relevant to their area of responsibility to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for improvement, and~~
- ~~• Promote emerging Council strategies relevant to their area of responsibility locally and where relevant to a wider audience.~~

~~The Leader will determine the subject matter that Policy Champions will focus on during the period of their appointment. The Leader will notify the Chief Executive in writing of the appointment of Policy Champions which will take effect immediately upon receipt by the Chief Executive of the notice.~~

~~A Policy Champion holds office until:-~~

- ~~(a) he/she resigns from office; or~~
- ~~(b) he/she is suspended from being a Councillor under Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 (although he/she may resume office at the end of the period of suspension); or~~
- ~~(c) he/she is no longer a Councillor; or~~
- ~~(d) he/she is removed from office by the Leader who must give written notice of any removal to the Chief Executive.~~

~~The removal will take immediate effect after receipt of the notice by the Chief Executive. The Leader will fill any Policy Champion vacancy arising by notifying the Chief Executive in writing of his appointment. Such appointments will take effect immediately upon receipt of the notice and the Chief Executive will report the change of Policy Champion to the next meeting of the Council.~~

PROPOSED CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

6. The schedule of rates at the end of the Members Allowance Scheme consequentially should be amended as follows:

| Wandsworth Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme – Schedule of Rates Effective 1 April 2024 | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|---|
| | London Councils Independent Panel Recommended 2023 | Wandsworth payable rate | Total maximum cost under the 2024/25 scheme |
| Special responsibility allowance (SRAs) | | | |
| Policy Champions (up to eight can be appointed) | £3,105 - £9,314 | £2,991 | £23,929 |
| Deputy Cabinet Members | £3,105 - £9,314 | 9,314 | £46,570 |
| | | | |

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. The appointment of Deputy Cabinet Members as was the case with Policy Champions follows practice in other local authorities. The proposed changes to Article 7 of the Constitution ensure that the function performed by Deputy Cabinet Members is set out as is the process for appointments and removal as well as notification to
8. Councils can choose to make provision for members to receive a special responsibility allowance pursuant to paragraph 5 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. Specifically, Councils can make provision for special responsibility allowances for the following categories of roles performed by members:

- (a) acting as leader or deputy leader of a political group within the authority;
- (b) acting as a member of an executive where the authority are operating executive arrangements within the meaning of Part II of the Local Government Act 2000;
- (c) presiding at meetings of a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee;
- (d) representing the authority at meetings of, or arranged by, any other body;
- (e) acting as a member of a committee or sub-committee of the authority which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods;
- (f) acting as the spokesman of a political group on a committee or sub-committee of the authority;
- (g) acting as a member of an adoption panel within the meaning of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983(1);
- (h) acting as a member of any committee or sub-committee that deals with any function arising under any enactment authorising the authority to license or control the carrying on of any activity;
- (i) carrying out such other activities in relation to the discharge of the authority's functions as require of the member an amount of time and effort

equal to or greater than would be required of him by any one of the activities mentioned in sub-paragraphs (a) to (h) (whether or not that activity is specified in the scheme).

9. The proposed special responsibility allowance for Deputy Cabinet Members falls within the category of members described in paragraph (i).

COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

10. Based on current costs, the amendments to the Members' Allowance Scheme are expected to lead to an additional General Fund cost of £23,000 per annum and can be met from within existing Council budgets.

The Town Hall,
Wandsworth,
SW18 2PU.

Abdus Choudhury
Director of Law and Governance

12 May 2025

Background papers

The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2023 - Report of the Independent Panel

All reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, regulatory and other committees, the Executive and the full Council can be viewed on the Council's website (www.wandsworth.gov.uk/moderngov) unless the report was published before May 2001, in which case the Democratic Services Officer Chris Kelly; email chris.kelly@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk can supply it if required.