

## DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	9 MARCH 2021	6

### MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

#### PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

#### SUMMARY

At the meeting of the Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) held on 10 December 2020 and 25 February 2021, consideration was given to the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge initiative with particular reference to the member champion role.

The Mental Health Challenge for Local Authorities in England was initiated some five years ago to encourage and support councils in England to champion mental health in their communities. This is something that CHAMPS Public Health Collaborative & North West Employers have recently been promoting via the Councillor Development Network.

Member well-being sits within the Terms of Reference of the MDSG and Health Development and Promotion sits within this Committee.

In general, local authorities at all levels are encouraged to sign up the commitments of the Mental Health Challenge. The Challenge commits the Council to a number of actions, and these are summarised in the appendix to the report.

The Covid pandemic has further highlighted the prevalence of poor mental health in communities and it is acknowledged that support is sometimes sought via local councillors or the local authority itself.

The MDSG focused on matters relevant to the member well-being aspect and in doing so, nominated Councillor Sally Nash-Walker to fulfil the Member Lead role.

Whilst the MDSG are supportive of the principle of signing up to initiative, given the detail of this challenge and potential resource issues/implications, the wider/general aspects of the initiative are referred to this committee for consideration.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To consider supporting/ signing up to the Mental Health Challenge along the lines identified in the appendix to the report.
2. To support the recommendation of the MDSG in nominating Councillor Sally Nash- Walker as the Council's Mental Health Lead and seek full Council's approval of this.

## SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

None

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy

√

Environment – To deliver services customers expect

√

Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way

√

Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit

## REPORT

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The Mental Health Challenge for Local Authorities in England has now been active for five years. The Centre for Mental Health set up the Mental Health Challenge in partnership with Association of Mental Health Providers, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and Young Minds, in order to support and encourage local authorities to take a proactive approach to the issues of mental health.

1.2 The aim of the Challenge is to encourage and support local leadership for mental health and wellbeing through local authority elected members. The challenge asks councils to appoint an elected member to champion mental health. In return, the national charities offer champions and their councils' advice, information and a network of peers in similar roles.

1.3 CHAMPS Public Health Collaborative & North West Employers have recently been promoting this Challenge via the Councillor Development Network.

1.4 The Mental Health Challenge is already showing that local authority member champions have the potential to raise the profile of mental health and wellbeing in local communities, to enable councils to integrate mental health into the full range of their policies and responsibilities, and to link up with other local leaders to foster partnerships and encourage action to promote mental health and life chances.

1.5 To date, the body has have succeeded in creating a network of more than 100 county, unitary, borough and district councils, each with a named elected member to champion mental health within their respective council locality.

### 2. The National Agenda

2.1 The topic of mental health has featured on the national agenda for many years now and the recent Covid pandemic has further highlighted the ongoing issues associated with mental health in communities.

### 3. Terms of Reference

3.1 Member well-being sits within the Terms of Reference of the MDSG. Health Development and Promotion sits within the Terms of Reference of the Environment, Health & Housing Committee.

### 4. The Challenge

4.1 The Challenge commits the Council to a number of actions, and these are highlighted in the appendix attached.

### 5. Member Champion/Lead

5.1 As a first step, councils are being requested to appoint a member to champion mental health. In return, the council and the member representative will receive support and information in undertaking the role. The role is necessarily limited.

5.2 The MDSG at its meeting on 25 February nominated Councillor Sally Nash-Walker to this role and this committee is requested to endorse this proposal and commend the same to the council for approval.

## 6. The Member Development Perspective

6.1 Given that member well-being sits within the MDSG remit, the Group was of the view that it is vital that awareness of positive mental health is embedded in the organisation raising the profile of the issues contributing towards poor mental health and identifying how elected members can maintain good mental health and at the same time, help in the preventative and educational role within the community. The Health and Well-Being Officer could link in with this area of work.

6.2 The MDSG is supportive of signing up to the principle of the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no financial implications arising from this report
Legal	No direct implications
Community Safety	No direct implications
Human Rights and Equalities	No direct implications
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	No direct implications
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No direct implications

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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
None		None

Appendix - A copy of the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge initiative is attached