



Local Government Act 1972

I Hereby Give You Notice that an **Extraordinary Meeting** of the Durham County Council Specially Convened under Section 249 of the Local Government 1972 will be held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 20 July 2022 immediately following the conclusion of the Ordinary meeting of the County Council (which commences at 10.00 a.m.)** to consider whether, in accordance with Section 249, the title of Honorary Alderman should be conferred on the person detailed in the attached report.

1. To receive any declarations of interest from Members
2. Conferment of the Title of Honorary Alderman - Report of Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 3 - 8)

And pursuant to the provisions of the above-named act, **I Hereby Summon You** to attend the said meeting

Dated this 12th day of July 2022

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

To: All Members of the County Council

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20 July 2022

**Conferment of the Title of
Honorary Aldermen**



Report of Corporate Management Team

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Councillor Amanda Hopgood, Leader of the Council

**Councillor Richard Bell, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio
Holder for Finance**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To seek confirmation of the conferment of the title of Honorary Alderman upon a retiring Member who qualifies for the same in accordance with previously agreed criteria.

Executive summary

- 2 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Council may, by resolution, passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting at a special meeting of the Council, confer the title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman, on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Council as past Members of that Council. It is not possible to award the title to current councillors.
- 3 The Council agreed its criteria for conferring the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman in July 2013 and reviewed and clarified the criteria in July 2017, and again in December 2021. At the special meeting of Council (following the already scheduled meeting on 8 December 2021), Council agreed to confer the honorary title in accordance with the criteria to 13 former councillors, and a presentation to the new Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman took place at the Council meeting held on 26 January 2022.

- 4 Following that meeting it came to light that a former Councillor, Kevin Thompson, who retired from the Council in May 2021 met the eligibility criteria but was not included on the list.

Recommendation(s)

- 5 It is recommended that Council:-
- (a) give approval for Officers to contact the eligible candidate to confirm that they are willing to accept the title;
 - (b) that Council confers the title of Honorary Alderman on the former Councillor, who is not already in receipt of the title, as listed at paragraph 13, provided that he has indicated his willingness to accept the title.

Background

- 6 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Council may, by resolution, passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting at a special meeting of the Council, confer the title of Honorary Aldermen or Honorary Alderwomen, on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Council as past Members of that Council, but who are not then Members. It is not therefore possible to award the title to current Councillors.
- 7 Post Local Government Reorganisation, Council sought to harmonise the criteria for the conferment of the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman that had previously existed in each of the eight constituent authorities. This led to Council agreeing in 2013 that the criteria be the completion of 16 years' as a councillor before becoming eligible for the conferment of the title of Honorary Alderman.
- 8 On 19 July 2017, Council resolved that the criteria adopted should be interpreted as being four complete terms, or sixteen years' service, to account for the terms of office shortened as a consequence of changes to local government elections due to a foot and mouth outbreak.

Conferment of the Title of Honorary Alderman/ Alderwoman following elections in 2021

- 9 58 Members either retired or were not re-elected to the Council at the local government elections in May 2021. Of those, twenty-two members met the eligibility criteria referred to above.
- 10 Of those twenty-two eligible Members, nine had already had the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman conferred on them by a District Council, and this honour was not lost by virtue of Local Government Reorganisation, but rather transferred from the awarding district council to the County Council on 1 April 2009. Those nine former members are able to use the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman without it being re-conferred.
- 11 The title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman may not be used by anyone whilst they serve as a Member of the Council. Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen are entitled to attend and take part in such Civic events and ceremonies as the Council may, from time to time, decide, but shall not have the right to:-

- (a) attend meetings of the Council or Committees of the Council (except as a member of the public); or have the right to influence meetings of the Council or a Committee of the Council;
 - (b) receive allowances or payments under Sections 173 to 176 of the Local Government Act 1972 (travelling allowance, subsistence allowances, allowances for attending conferences, payment of expenses of official and courtesy visits);
 - (c) attend Civic Ceremonies. Over the years, the attendance of Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen at events has been left to the discretion of the serving Chairman of the Council. In recent years Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen have been invited to participate in the Chairman's Christmas lunch and attend each meeting of the County Council.
- 12 At the special meeting of Council (following the already scheduled meeting on 8 December 2021), Council agreed to confer the honorary title in accordance with the criteria to 13 former councillors, and a presentation to the new Honorary Aldermen/ Alderwomen was the first item of ordinary business at the Council meeting on 26 January 2022.
- 13 Following that meeting it came to light that Kevin Thompson, who retired from the Council in May 2021 met the criteria but due to an error when collating the historical data, he was not included within the list of those eligible. The records of the former borough council and county council have been checked and the length of service to meet the criteria has been confirmed as follows:
- Borough Council Service 2003 to 2009 - 6 years
 - County Council Service 2008 to 2021- 14 years
- 14 It is therefore proposed that the title of Honorary Alderman is conferred on Kevin Thompson. If Council agrees to confer the honorary title a presentation to the new Honorary Alderman will be the first item of ordinary business at the Council meeting on 21 September 2022.

Background papers

- None

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may by resolution, passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting at a special meeting of the Council, confer the title of Honorary Aldermen or Honorary Alderwomen, on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Council as past Members of that Council, but who are not then Members.

To aid consistency of determination as to whether to award the honorary title by way of objective criteria adopted in 2013, and clarified in 2017 to mean service of four full terms.

Finance

There will be the cost of agendas and calling of a special meeting including Councillor travelling expenses. Holding the special meeting on a date already scheduled for a Council meeting will reduce these costs. The overall costs can be met from within existing budgets.

Consultation

As set out in the report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no equality and diversity implications arising out of the report.

Climate Change

There are no climate change implications arising out of the report.

Human Rights

There are no Human Rights implications arising out of the report.

Crime and Disorder

There are no Crime and Disorder implications arising out of the report.

Staffing

There are no staffing implications arising out of the report.

Accommodation

There are no accommodation implications arising out of the report.

Risk

There are no risks to the Council arising out of the report.

Procurement

There are no procurement implications in relation to the report.