

## County Council

19 July 2017

Honorary Aldermen



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### **Report of Corporate Management Team Report of John Hewitt, Corporate Director of Resources Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council**

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To seek confirmation of the criteria for the conferment of the title of Honorary Aldermen upon retiring Members to identify those upon whom the title of Honorary Aldermen should be conferred.

#### **Background**

- 2 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 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.
- 3 Under LGR transitional arrangements, some of the former District Councils were able to, and did, confer the title on serving Members. This appointment transferred automatically to the new Council, and there is therefore no need to re-confer the title on those who received it from a former authority. It is no longer possible to confer the title on serving Members of the Council.
- 4 In 2013, it was resolved by the Council to adopt a single criterion for deciding whether eminent service had been rendered to enable the Titles to be conferred. This criterion was the completion of a total of sixteen years' service as a Councillor (whether of the existing County Council or any of the former two-tier authorities, and irrespective of whether the service was concurrent or consecutive in the case of Members of more than one Council).
- 5 It was noted in the July 2013 report to Council that sixteen years' service was the equivalent of four Council terms. However, the specific resolution of the Council was to adopt the criterion of sixteen years' service.
- 6 The title is not allowed to be used by anyone whilst serving as a Member of the Council, nor is an Alderman or Alderwoman entitled to attend or take part in any of the Council's Civic Ceremonies of the Council as an Alderman or Alderwoman.

- 7 An Honorary Alderman is entitled to attend and take part in such Civic 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; or
  - (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).
- 8 Traditionally, any invitations to Civic Ceremonies to Honorary Aldermen has been left to the discretion of the serving Chairman of the Council and over recent years Honorary Aldermen have been invited to participate in the Chairman's Christmas lunch. Honorary Aldermen are also invited to each meeting of the County Council.
- 9 The Council may spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purposes of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person on whom they have conferred the title. The County Council has previously presented a framed certificate to those on whom they have conferred the title.

### **Former Arrangements**

- 10 The Constitution Working Group (CWG) reviewed the previously adopted criteria on 7 July 2017. They noted the previous adoption of 16 years' service, and the fact that in coming to that conclusion, it would mean that four full terms had been served. They also considered whether additional criteria should be used over and above years served but concluded that the subjectivity of such criteria was not appropriate. The repeated re-election of prospective candidates by the electorate should be considered sufficiently objective criteria for conferring the title.

### **The Process**

- 11 The 2017 local elections saw the retirement of 39 Members, and Council is invited to consider the exercise of the Council's power under section 249 of the Local Government Act to confer further Titles.
- 12 Council will need to firstly confirm the basis of conferring the Title, agree upon whom the Title should be conferred and then hold a special meeting where a resolution is passed in respect of the conferment by not less than two thirds of the Members present and voting.

### **Considerations**

- 13 The foot and mouth outbreak in 2001 delayed the holding of the local elections in that year. This has resulted in two retiring Members narrowly failing to meet the currently adopted criterion of sixteen years' service, although they did each serve four full terms.

- 14 Members may also recall that they were elected to the new Council in May 2008, which meant the first term of the Council was in fact 5 years rather than four.
- 15 There are ten other retiring Members who are eligible for the Title under the existing criteria, although 4 of these already hold the Title as conferred by the former districts and should not therefore have the same re-conferred.
- 16 CWG believed that the existing criterion of sixteen years' service was equivalent to having served four full Council terms – whether those terms are shorter or longer than the usual four years. They therefore agreed that Council should consider a list of retiring members, which acknowledges this small departure from the existing criterion in the case of the two Councillors first elected in June 2001.

### **Recommendations and reasons**

- 17 It is recommended that Council:
  - (a) acknowledge the criteria for conferring the title of Honorary Alderman is sixteen years' service, or four full terms;
  - (b) confer the title of Honorary Alderman on those past Members who meet the sixteen years' service criterion including, on this occasion, because of the circumstances set out in the report, those two Members that have served four full terms but whose service falls slightly short of sixteen years as a result of the 2001 election date having been delayed by a month.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **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.

**Staffing:** None specific within this report

**Risk:** None specific within this report

**Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Duty:** None specific within this report

**Accommodation:** None specific within this report

**Crime and Disorder:** None specific within this report

**Human Rights:** None specific within this report

**Consultation:** None specific within this report

**Procurement:** None specific within this report

**Disability Discrimination Act:** None specific within this report

### **Legal Implications:**

Under Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 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, the Council adopted a criteria of 16 years' service in 2013, having considered that four full terms service was sufficient to evidence eminent service to the Council.