

Committee: Full Council

Agenda Item

Date: 14 December 2010

13

Title: Honorary Aldermen

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Item for decision

Summary

1. This report has been prepared at the request of the Leader of the Council, and following discussions with the leaders of the other two political groups.
2. It explains the legislative provisions under which a Council may confer the status of Honorary Alderman on a former member of the Council and the procedure to be adopted.

Recommendations

- a) That the Council considers whether to introduce the concept of honouring former members of the Council by offering them the position of Honorary Alderman.
- b) If the Council supports the principle referred to in a) above, to consider whether
 - i. initial nomination(s) be considered after the Annual Council meeting in May 2011
 - ii. Candidates for the honour should normally have served at least 20 years (*or some other period*) as an Uttlesford district councillor
 - iii. Nominations can be put forward by any existing member of the Council
 - iv. Nominations be referred to the Chairman of the Council, who would consult with political group leaders and the Chief Executive before deciding whether to convene a special Council meeting to consider the nomination
 - v. A certificate be presented to each individual acknowledging their appointment as an Honorary Alderman, with an appropriate citation
 - vi. Honorary Aldermen receive the privileges referred to in paragraph 10 of this report

Financial Implications

There are no costs associated with the recommendations.

Background Papers

3. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report.

Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)

Impact

- 4.

Communication/Consultation	The proposals contained in this report have been discussed informally by political group leaders.
Community Safety	No impact
Equalities	No impact
Health and Safety	No impact
Human Rights/Legal Implications	No impact
Sustainability	No impact
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	No impact

Situation

5. This report has been prepared at the request of the Leader of the Council, and following discussions with the leaders of the other two political groups.
6. Under Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 1972, the Council is empowered to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on *'persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past members of that Council, but who are not then councillors of the Council'*.
7. A number of councils use these provisions as a means of formally acknowledging 'eminent' service of former members, and this tends to be triggered by the number of years served. Some councils set this level as low as 12 or 15 years, but it generally seems to be in excess of 20 and in some instances 25 years.
8. Any nomination to confer the status on a former member who qualified could be considered (on an informal and confidential basis) by a small group of

Full Council, item 13 – Honorary Aldermen

members as to whether that person had rendered eminent services to the Council when he/she was a member. This could be done by the Chairman of the Council, in conjunction with political group leaders who, in turn, could take 'soundings' from within their own group.

9. A conferment ceremony would then take place at a specially convened meeting of the Council. The resolution to appoint to the position of Honorary Alderman has to be passed with not less than two-thirds of members present voting in favour of the nomination(s).
10. An honorary alderman may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide, but does not have the right to attend Council or Committee meetings, or to receive allowances. Privileges could include:
 - a. Invitation to major civic ceremonies, such as Chairman's receptions; and
 - b. Inclusion in the mailing list for Council publications (such as the annual Council calendar)
11. If the Council agrees the principle of introducing the concept of Honorary Alderman status, it would seem appropriate to consider any initial nomination(s) following the Annual Council meeting in May 2011.
12. It would also be necessary to consider whether the ceremony should include the presentation of an appropriate badge or certificate to the individual in question. Whilst the cost of preparing a certificate would be at minimal cost and could be met from existing budgets, formal badges would be more expensive and would require specific budgetary provision.