

## **COUNCIL**

**25 APRIL 2019**

### **CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN AND ALDERWOMEN**

Portfolio holder: Councillor Rupert Turpin, Business Management

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

Author: Jane Ringham, Head Elections and Member Services

#### **Summary**

This report sets out matters for consideration regarding the establishment of criteria for the appointment of Aldermen and Alderwomen.

#### **1. Budget and policy framework**

1.1 This is a matter for Council.

#### **2. Background**

2.1 Under section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Council may confer the title of Honorary Alderwoman/man upon former members of the Council who, in the opinion of the Council have rendered “eminent service” to the Council as a past member of the authority or predecessor authority. The title of Honorary Freewoman/man is available for those who have provided eminent services to the people of Medway in particular.

2.2 The resolution to confer the title must be passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose.

2.3 The Act specifies that Honorary Alderwomen/men may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide and that they are not entitled to receive any members’ allowances or other payments of allowance, expenses etc.

- 2.4 The Act does not define “eminent service” to the Council and it is therefore at the discretion of individual councils to determine what this might constitute for their individual authority. This report recommends some criteria that have been discussed with representatives of both political groups.

### **3. Matters for consideration**

#### **Qualifications for appointment**

- 3.1 The following criteria are recommended to be used in addition to the statutory ones, after discussions with representatives of both political groups:
- 3.2 An individual will be eligible for nomination and appointment to the role of Honorary Alderwoman/man provided s/he-
- has provided eminent service to the Council or its predecessor authorities in addition to any services to the people of Medway for an aggregate total of not less than 25 years.
  - is respected by her/his peers
  - is proposed and seconded by serving members of the Council

#### **Timing of nominations and appointments**

- 3.3 It is also suggested that
- where a Councillor loses their seat by way of an election, or chooses not to stand for election, a nomination to be appointed as a Honorary Alderwoman/man should not be considered for at least one year from the appropriate local election
  - the frequency of appointments should not be more often than every four years
- 3.4 It is proposed that nominations are made by the Leader of each political Group to the Chief Executive. In the case of Councillors who are not members of a Group, nominations can be made by any such Councillor directly to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will then informally share the nominations with all the Group Leaders and make the necessary arrangements for a special meeting of Full Council to be convened at which the formal decision will be sought. At the conclusion of the special Council meeting each Honorary Alderwoman/man to be provided with a scroll commemorating the occasion.

## **Rights and privileges**

- 3.5 Section 249 of the Act sets out that Honorary Alderwomen/men may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide and that the title does not give a right to attend meetings of Full Council or committee meetings. However Council may wish to agree that Honorary Alderwomen/men be added to the Corporate and Civic event guest list so that they are invited to civic and ceremonial events including ceremonies to award the titles of Honorary Alderwoman/man and Honorary Freewoman/man and will be automatically invited to meetings of Full Council. Honorary Alderwomen/men will also be encouraged to support the office of the Mayor, including supporting fund-raising activities for the Mayor's charities. Their name will also be added to the Honorary Freeman/Alderman Board currently situated at Gun Wharf.
- 3.6 The role of Alderwoman/man is an honorary one, but to the public is perceived to be representative of the Council for historic reasons. In taking up this role all Alderwomen/men must agree and adhere to the following suggested protocol:
- That the person becoming Alderwoman/man does so in the full knowledge that they are perceived to be representative of the civic element of the Council and must act to the highest standards and will undertake to conduct themselves in accordance with the 7 principles of public life while acting in the capacity of Alderwoman/man.
  - In taking this role, Alderwomen/men are not to speak on behalf of the Council in any way whatsoever

## **Withdrawal of honorary title**

- 3.7 In the event of an Honorary Alderwomen/man being elected as a Medway Councillor they will cease to hold the office of Alderwoman/man and no longer be invited to attend meetings of Full Council or other civic and ceremonial events. The Chief Legal Officer will delete the name of the person concerned from the Honorary Freeman/Alderman Board and advise that person accordingly.

## **Resignation from the office of Honorary Alderwoman/man**

- 3.8 An Honorary Alderwoman/man may, at any time, tender their resignation from the office which shall be given in writing to the Chief Legal Officer.
- 3.9 Upon receipt of the written notice of resignation they will cease to hold the office of Alderwoman/man and no longer be invited to attend meetings of Full Council or other civic and ceremonial events the Chief Legal Officer shall remove the name of the person concerned from the Honorary Freeman/Alderman Board.

## 4. Advice and analysis

### 4.1 Sustainability

The sustainability implications of each Honorary Alderwoman/man ceremony will be considered at the time and measures will be taken to seek to reduce any negative impacts.

### 4.2 Diversity

A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been undertaken and is attached. The outcome was that there is unlikely to be an adverse impact on any of the characteristic groups.

## 5. Risk management

5.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community. The following table considers any significant risks arising from this report.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action to avoid or mitigate risk</b>	<b>Risk rating</b>
Damage to reputation of the Council amongst local population	Failure to have consistent policy on awarding title of Honorary Alderwoman/man	Suggested criteria have been informally discussed with each political group	D1

## 6. Financial implications

6.1 The Local Government Act 1972, section 249 states that a principal council may spend such reasonable sum as they think fit for the purpose of presenting an address, or a casket containing an address, to a person on whom they have conferred the title of honorary alderwoman/man. Officers have estimated that approximately £1,150 is required for each Honorary Alderwoman/man appointed to cover the costs of production of the scroll, any refreshments required post-ceremony and other associated costs. There is no provision in the 2019-20 Democracy and Governance division revenue budget for the associated costs of awarding the title of Honorary Alderwoman/man. Therefore any costs incurred will be a pressure to the service.

## **7. Legal implications**

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1 Full Council is asked to approve the criteria and process for the appointment of Honorary Alderwomen/men as set out in section 3 of the report.
- 8.2 Full Council is asked to agree to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to process the nominations received as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report.
- 8.3 Full Council is asked to agree to delegate authority to the Chief Legal Officer to deal with the withdrawal of the Honorary title as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report.
- 8.4 Full Council is asked to agree to delegate authority to the Chief Legal Officer to deal with a resignation from the office of Honorary Alderwoman/man as described in paragraph 3.9 of the report

## **Lead officer contact**

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Diversity Impact Assessment

## **Background papers**

None



## Appendix 1

<b>TITLE</b> Name / description of the issue being assessed	Criteria for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen
<b>DATE</b> Date the DIA is completed	5 February 2019
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b> Name, title and dept of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.	Jane Ringham Head of Elections & Member Services
<b>1 Summary description of the proposed change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed?</li> <li>• How does it compare with the current situation?</li> </ul>	
<p>This proposal recommends the introduction of criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen. There are no criteria in place at present.</p> <p>Under section 249 of the Local Government Act as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Council may confer the title of Honorary Alderwoman/man upon former members of the Council who, in the opinion of the Council have rendered “eminent service” to the Council as a past member of the authority or predecessor authority. The title of Honorary Freewoman/man is available for those who have provided eminent services to the people of Medway in particular.</p> <p>The resolution to confer the title must be passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose.</p> <p>The Act does not define “eminent service” to the Council and it is therefore at the discretion of individual councils to determine what this might constitute for their individual authority. This report suggests some criteria that have been discussed with representatives of all three political groups and an administrative process.</p> <p>The following criteria are suggested to be used in addition to the statutory ones, after discussions with representatives of all three political groups:</p> <p>An individual will be eligible for nomination and appointment to the role of Honorary Alderwoman/man provided s/he-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has provided eminent service to the Council or its predecessor authorities in addition to any services to the people of Medway for an aggregate total of not less than 25 years.</li> <li>• is respected by her/his peers</li> </ul>	

- is proposed and seconded by serving members of the Council

## Timing of nominations and appointments

It is also suggested that

- Where a Councillor loses their seat by way of an election, a nomination to be appointed as a Honorary Alderwoman/man should not be considered for at least one year from the appropriate local election
- the frequency of appointments should not be more often than every four years

It is proposed that nominations are made by the Leader of each political Group to the Chief Executive. In the case of Councillors who are not members of a Group, nominations can be made by any such Councillor directly to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will then informally share the nominations with all the Group Leaders and make the necessary arrangements for a special meeting of Full Council to be convened at which the formal decision will be sought. At the conclusion of the special Council meeting each Honorary Alderwoman/man to be provided with a scroll commemorating the occasion.

Section 249 of the Act sets out that Honorary Alderwomen/men may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide and that the title does not give a right to attend meetings of Full Council or committee meetings. It is suggested that Honorary Alderwomen/men be added to the Corporate and Civic event guest list so that they are invited to civic and ceremonial events including ceremonies to award the titles of Honorary Alderwoman/man and Honorary Freewoman/man and will be automatically be invited to meetings of Full Council. Honorary Alderwomen/men will also be encouraged to support the office of the Mayor, including supporting fund-raising activities for the Mayor's charities. Their name will also be added to the Honorary Freeman/Alderman Board currently situated at Gun Wharf.

The role of Alderwoman/man is an honorary one, but to the public is perceived to be representative of the Council for historic reasons. In taking up this role all Alderwomen/men must agree and adhere to the following suggested protocol:

- That the person becoming Alderwoman/man does so in the full knowledge that they are perceived to be representative of the civic element of the Council and must act to the highest standards and will undertake to conduct themselves in accordance with the 7 principles of public life while acting in the capacity of Alderwoman/man.
- In taking this role, Alderwomen/men are not to speak on behalf of the Council in any way whatsoever



## Withdrawal of honorary title

In the event of an Honorary Alderwomen/man being elected as a Medway Councillor they will cease to hold the office of Alderwoman/man and no longer be invited to attend meetings of Full Council or other civic and ceremonial events. The Chief Legal Officer will delete the name of the person concerned from the Honorary Freeman/Alderman Board and advise that person accordingly.

## Resignation from the office of Honorary Alderwoman/man

An Honorary Alderwoman/man may, at any time, tender their resignation from the office which shall be given in writing to the Monitoring Officer.

Upon receipt of the written notice of resignation they will cease to hold the office of Alderwoman/man and no longer be invited to attend meetings of Full Council or other civic and ceremonial events The Monitoring Officer shall remove the name of the person concerned from the Honorary Freeman/Alderman Board.

## 2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

- Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.
- Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile

The report and recommendations are based on what has been agreed between the two current political groups on the Council and criteria used by other authorities.

## 3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to :

- Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't?

(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age		✓	✓
Disability		✓	✓
Gender reassignment		✓	✓
Marriage/civil partnership		✓	✓
Pregnancy/maternity		✓	✓

# Diversity impact assessment

Race		✓	✓
Religion/belief		✓	✓
Sex		✓	✓
Sexual orientation		✓	✓
Other (eg low income groups)		✓	✓

#### 4 Summary of the likely impacts

- Who will be affected?
- How will they be affected?

All ex-Councillors who meet the criteria can be nominated for appointment as an Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman therefore there is unlikely to be an adverse impact on any of these characteristic groups.

The role of Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman includes being invited to participate in civic ceremonies and supporting fund-raising activities for the Mayor's charities so are likely to be able to foster good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

#### 5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?
- Are there alternative providers?
- Can demand for services be managed differently?

Full Council has to consider and approve the appointment of all Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman by resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting at a special meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose.

#### 6 Action plan

- Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date

## 7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:

- to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate
- consider alternatives
- gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

The report is submitted to Full Council on 25 April 2019 to seek their approval.

## 8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that:

- the recommendation can be implemented
- sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned
- the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

### Assistant Director

Perry Holmes, Assistant Director, Chief Legal Officer,  
Legal & Corporate Services

### Date

**10 April 2019**

Contact your Performance and Intelligence hub for advice on completing this assessment

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