

Audit and Governance Committee

22 June 2022

Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen of the Dorset Council area

For Recommendation to Council

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): All Councillors

Executive Director: J Mair, Director of Legal & Democratic

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the council to confer the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman in recognition of previous service by elected members. Whilst some of Dorset Council's predecessor councils made similar awards for Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen, this practice was not adopted by Dorset Council on its creation in 2019.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the council, in consultation with the Group Leaders, propose establishing a mechanism to enable the conferring of the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman to former members who have given a period of public service for a minimum of 16 years, and are considered to have made an outstanding contribution to the area in their role as elected member.

Recommendation:

That Full Council be asked to agree to amend the Constitution to include the criteria and process for awarding the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman to former members of Dorset Council.

Reason for Recommendation:

Inclusion of the process and criteria for conferring an honorary title on a former member within the Constitution will make the process more open and transparent.

1. Legislative background

- 1.1 Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 permits the council to confer the title "Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman" on a person who has, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent service to the council as a former member of the council. The status of an Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman is a purely honorary one in recognition of previous service, and does not give any special status to attend or to address meetings of the council or any committee or sub-committee.
- 1.2 The Act does not specify how 'eminent service' is defined and, as such, has been left as a matter for local interpretation.

2. Process

- 2.1 It is proposed that the council establishes a panel of members who will consider nominations for the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman and make recommendations to a specially convened meeting of Full Council. The proposal is that the panel is be made up of 1 member from each of the political groups appointed by the Group Leaders, plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman.
- 2.2 The Act states that conferring such a title should be undertaken at a meeting of Full Council specially convened for the purposes of considering conferring a title where not less than two-thirds of the members must vote in favour. The specially convened meeting will be held immediately prior to a scheduled Full Council meeting.
- 2.3 Any nominations for Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen should meet the following criteria:
 - The nominee has retired from Dorset Council, and
 - The nominee shall have served a minimum of 16 years which can include service on any of the following authorities:
 - Dorset Council
 - Dorset County Council (disbanded in March 2019)
 - East Dorset District Council (disbanded in March 2019)
 - North Dorset District Council (disbanded in March 2019)
 - Purbeck District Council (disbanded in March 2019)
 - West Dorset District Council (disbanded in March 2019)

— Weymouth & Portland Borough Council (disbanded in March 2019),
and

- The nominee is considered to have made an outstanding contribution in their role as an elected member.

2.3 It is intended that any person who is bestowed the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman will receive a badge and a certificate in recognition of the honour.

3. **Financial Implications**

3.1 It is likely that each badge and certificate will cost approximately £100 to produce based on a minimum order of 10 badges. This cost will be met from the existing Chairman's budget.

4. **Climate Implications**

4.1 There are no climate implications associated with this report.

5. **Well-being and Health Implications**

5.1 There are no well-being and health implications associated with this report.

6. **Other Implications**

6.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

7. **Risk Assessment**

7.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

8. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

This report does not impact on any equality and diversity issues.

9. **Appendices**

None

10. **Background Papers**

None