

The Committee considered a report on proposals to enable the Council to confer the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman in recognition of previous service by elected members, with the mechanism to be able to do this – and the criteria to be met - set out in detail, namely:-

- former members of Dorset Council who had given a period of public service for a minimum of 16 years,
- had served on either Dorset Council, or its predecessors - Dorset County Council or one of the six former District Councils now comprising the Dorset Council area, and
- were considered to have made an outstanding contribution to the area in their role as elected member.

The process for bestowing to honour was detailed and explained by the Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services in that it was proposed to establish a panel of members who would consider nominations and make recommendations to a specially convened meeting of Full Council – to precede a scheduled meeting of Council. The Panel's composition was explained and what proportion of the Full Council would be required to endorse that nomination.

Any person who was bestowed the title would receive a badge and a certificate in recognition of the honour, funded through the Chairman's Fund.

The Committee discussed the arrangements and criteria as being proposed and, whilst they were pleased to see such recognition being proposed, asked how the 16 years' service had been arrived at. Officers confirmed that this was seen to be an optimum length of service which would reflect a member's commitment to public service and provide the opportunity for outstanding achievements to be recognised and evaluated.

Some members considered the 16 year qualifying period too protracted, given that, in their opinion, a member serving for less time could well have been seen to have significantly achieved, but would not necessarily qualify for the honour. They asked that a shorter period be considered.

The Director – Legal and Democratic recognised this and suggested that the criterion could be amended to include the word "ordinarily", so that there was scope for any nominations that fell into that category having the opportunity to be considered too.

Discussion took place as to how "outstanding contribution" would be qualified and what judgement would be made on this. Officers confirmed that although this was open to interpretation, in most cases it should be fairly evident, with the Nomination Panel being able to assess this criterion in the capacity they had.

What opportunity there was for town and parish councillors to be considered for the honour was also raised, with officers confirming that these titles were only able to be bestowed on those members as categorised in the second bullet point. However, there were other options for recognition of contributions made by Parish and Town councillors i.e Honorary Freeman/Freewoman.

Having had the opportunity to consider this matter and having a better understanding of what it entailed, the Committee was satisfied with the suggested amended wording by the Director – Legal and Democratic and, in being proposed by Cllr Bill Pipe and seconded by Cllr Robin Legg, it was

Recommendation

- 1) 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.
- 2) the wording of the second bullet point in paragraph 3.2 of the report as to the criteria to be met for any nominations for Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen be amended to read “ The nominee shall **ordinarily** have served a minimum of 16 years.....”

Reason for Decision

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.