

Audit and Governance Committee

13 November 2023

Honorary Alderman 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

Report Author: Jacqui Andrews on behalf of the Chairman of Dorset Council

Job Title: Service Manager, Democratic and Electoral Services

Tel: 01258 484325

Email: jacqui.andrews@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to confer the title of Honorary Alderman in recognition of previous service by elected members. Whilst some of Dorset Council's predecessor councils conferred such titles this practice was not adopted by Dorset Council on its creation in 2019.

At its meeting in July 2022 the Full Council did not support a recommendation from the Committee to enable the title of Honorary Alderman to be conferred on former members of the Council.

Conscious that more than a year has elapsed since the proposal was last considered and that a significant number of members were absent from the July 2022 meeting the Chairman has asked that the proposal should be reconsidered and recommended again to the Council.

Recommendation

That Full Council agrees to amend the Constitution to include the criteria and process for awarding the title of Honorary Alderman of the Dorset Council area to former members of Dorset Council.

Reason for Recommendation

Being able to confer an honorary title on a former member of the Council is an important step. It will enable the Council to recognise and celebrate the contribution made by those former councillors whose successors believe them to have made an outstanding contribution.

1. Background

- 1.1 Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 permits the Council to confer the title "Honorary Alderman" on a person who has, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent service to the council as a former member of the council.
- 1.2 The status of an Alderman 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. It does nevertheless provide the Council with a means, at very little cost, to both recognise and celebrate the service and achievements of past councillors.
- 1.3 As there were a large number of apologies for the meeting in July 2022 when this proposal was originally considered, the Chairman is seeking a further opportunity for members to reconsider the designation of past councillors as Honorary Aldermen.
- 1.4 It is hoped that by communicating the designation of Honorary Aldermen, this will raise the profile of councillors and highlight the important work that they carry out in the communities, as well as at formal decision-making meetings.

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 and make recommendations to a specially convened meeting of Full Council. The proposal is that the panel is made up of 1 member from each of the political groups appointed by the Group Leaders, plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council.
- 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 ordinarily be held immediately prior to a scheduled Full Council meeting, avoiding the cost

usually associated with convening an additional meeting of the Full Council.

2.3 It proposed by the Chairman that any nominations for Honorary Alderman should meet the following criteria:

- The nominee has retired or is no longer a Dorset Council member, and shall have ordinarily 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.

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

3 Financial Implications

3.1 It is likely that each badge will cost approximately £150 to produce based on a minimum order of 10 badges. This cost will be met from the existing Chairman's budget – no additional funding is being sought.

4 Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology 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

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

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A – Nomination Process

10 Background Papers

10.1 None

Appendix A

Nomination Process for conferring the title of Honorary Alderman of the Dorset Council area

Nominations for the title of Honorary Alderman of the Dorset Council area should be submitted to the Chairman of Dorset Council.

The Chairman will arrange for a panel of members to meet who will consider nominations for the title of Honorary Alderman and make recommendations to a specially convened meeting of Full Council. The panel shall be made up of 1 member from each of the political groups appointed by the Group Leaders, plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Dorset Council.

Any nominations for Honorary Alderman should meet the following criteria:

- The nominee has retired from Dorset Council, or is no longer a Dorset Council member, and
- The nominee shall have ordinarily 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.

Nominations supported by the panel will be considered 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 ordinarily be held immediately prior to a scheduled Full Council meeting.

It is intended that any person who is bestowed the title of Honorary Alderman of the Dorset Council area will receive a badge and a certificate in recognition of the honour.