

Report of: Catherine Witham – City Solicitor

Report to: General Purposes Committee

Date: 15th May 2019

Subject: Revised Criteria for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen/Women

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Under section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may confer the title of Honorary Alderman/woman 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.
2. The resolution to confer the title must be passed by a majority of at least two-thirds of members present at a specially convened Full Council meeting.
3. 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.
4. A number of councils have developed criteria designed to ensure a consistency of approach whilst at the same time allowing the flexibility to recognise what might constitute “eminent service” to the Council in all its many forms.

Recommendations

General Purposes Committee are requested to consider this report and to make a recommendation to the annual meeting of Council on 23rd May that

- the "Protocol for the nomination of Honorary Aldermen/women within Leeds City Council" be adopted and included at part 5 of the Constitution; and

- the City Solicitor be authorised to review and amend the Protocol as necessary in consultation with the group whips.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the creation of a “protocol for the nomination of Honorary Aldermen/women” to be added to part 5 of the Constitution, which would include a revised criteria to consider nominations for the role of Honorary Aldermen/women.

2. Background information

- 2.1. Under section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may confer the title of Honorary Alderman/woman 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.
- 2.2. Following each local election, political agreement is sought as to the number of Honorary Aldermen/women, if any, that will be admitted to the role during that year.
- 2.3. Leaders of each political group represented on Council are asked to identify long serving Councillors that have either stood down, or have lost their seat and are not seeking re-election.

3. Main issues

- 3.1. The Local Government Act 1972 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.
- 3.2. Leeds City Council does not currently have an agreed definition of the term “eminent service” which could be used as a criteria in identifying suitable persons for consideration for the role of Alderman/woman.
- 3.3. The Chief Whip, in consultation with all Group Whips, has identified that a minimum period of 8 years’ service in the role as Elected Member would provide a suitable length of service to accompany the criteria of “eminent service” from the point of view of this Council.
- 3.4. The complete criteria would then read:

Any person nominated for the honorary role of Alderman/woman should:

- No longer hold the position of Councillor
- Have served a minimum of 8 years on the Council, or have held the role of either Leader of Council or Lord Mayor
- Have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services by way of exceptional contribution to the City and it’s Council

4. Consultation and Engagement

4.1. This proposal has been discussed with Leaders and Whips from each Group.

4.2. The following comments have been received as part of the consultation:

4.2.1. "I'm not sure I like the idea of 8 years' service. We can all point to colleagues who've served less, but with great distinction."

4.2.2. "I do not agree with the second criteria. I think there is a case for saying that if you stand for the Council again you would resign as an Alderman."

5. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

5.1. There are no equality diversity cohesion or integration implications arising from the proposals set out in this report.

6. Resources and value for money

6.1. There are no specific implications arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

7.1. There are no legal, access to information or call in implications arising from this report.

8. Risk Management

8.1 There are no risks arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1. General Purposes Committee are requested to consider this report and to make a recommendation to the annual meeting of Council on 23rd May that:

- the "Protocol for the nomination of Honorary Aldermen/women within Leeds City Council" be adopted and included at part 5 of the Constitution; and
- the City Solicitor be authorised to review and amend the Protocol as necessary in consultation with the group whips.

10. Appendices

10.1. Protocol for the nomination of Honorary Aldermen/women within Leeds City Council