

CABINET MEETING – 14th March 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMAN AND ALDERWOMAN OF THE CITY OF SUNDERLAND

Author(s):

Chief Executive

Purpose of Report:

To consider recommending to Council the appointment of two former Councillors as Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman of the City of Sunderland.

Description of Decision:

To recommend to Council that:

- (i) in accordance with the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council do confer the titles of Honorary Alderman, and Honorary Alderwoman of the City, on former Councillors Mr Peter Wood and Mrs Louise Farthing, in recognition of their eminent service to the Council and to the people of the City of Sunderland.
- (ii) authority be given for the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree all appropriate arrangements for the formal ceremony at an extraordinary meeting of the Council to be held at the earliest opportunity.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The appointments to the position of Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman are a fitting way to formally recognise the distinguished service of former Councillors, both to the Council and to the City of Sunderland.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

To make no appointments to the position of Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman. This option is not recommended as it would fail to take an opportunity for the Council to recognise and celebrate the significant contribution made to civic life through the distinguished service of these former Councillors.

Impacts analysed;

Equality **Privacy** **Sustainability** **Crime and Disorder**

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes/No

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes/No

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes/No

APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMAN AND ALDERWOMAN OF THE CITY OF SUNDERLAND

Report of the Chief Executive

1. Purpose of the Report

To consider recommending to Council the appointment of two former Councillors as Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman of the City of Sunderland.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

To recommend to Council that:

- (i) in pursuance of the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council do confer the titles of Honorary Alderman and Honorary Alderwoman of the City on former Councillors Mr Peter Wood and Mrs Louise Farthing, in recognition of their eminent service to the Council and to the people of the City of Sunderland.
- (ii) authority be given for the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree all appropriate arrangements for the formal ceremony at an extraordinary meeting of the Council to be held at the earliest opportunity.

3. Introduction/Background

At a meeting on 25 September 2013, the Council agreed a scheme for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen of the City of Sunderland and for this to be conferred upon persons who have rendered eminent services to the Council.

4. Current Position

In adopting a scheme for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen the Council has an opportunity to honour and celebrate the achievements of past Councillors for their services. Under the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may, by resolutions passed by not less than two-thirds of the Councillors voting thereon at a meeting specially convened for the purpose:

- (i) admit to be Honorary Freemen of the City persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the City; and
- (ii) confer the title of Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman upon persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Council as past Councillors. The role is not political and does not attract any payment or allowance, but may, at the Council's discretion, provide those appointed Alderman with some small privileges in recognition of their distinguished service, and an opportunity to continue to play a valuable role in civic life.

4.1 Proposed Appointments

In accordance with the agreed arrangements the following former Councillors have been nominated, in recognition of their eminent service to the Council and to the people of the City of Sunderland; - Mr Peter Wood; and - Mrs Louise Farthing.

Profile – Peter Wood

Peter Wood was a Councillor for the St Michaels ward from the 6th May 1999 until his retirement in 2023. During almost 24 years serving the people of Sunderland one of Peter's main interests was transport and he served on the regional Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority for a number of years until 2014 when its responsibilities transferred to the North East Combined Authority.

Peter played an active role on numerous Committees and Sub Committees including the East Sunderland Area, Planning and Highways Committee, Scrutiny Committees, Audit and Governance Committee, Human Resources Committee, and the Port Board.

Peter was appointed as the Leader of the Majority Party in Opposition by his colleagues on three occasions in 2004/05, 2006/07 and 2015/16 and also Deputy Leader from 2011 to 2013.

Peter was also steadfast in his role as school governor at St Aidan's School from 1999 up to his retirement in 2023.

Profile – Louise Farthing

Louise Farthing was first elected on to the Council on 1st May 1975 to serve Houghton ward for one term until 1979. Louise returned in May 1989 when she was again elected to serve Houghton ward until 2004 and during this period also served as Mayoress when Cllr Eric Bramfitt was Mayor during 1995/96, and Deputy Cabinet member of Leisure in 2000/01. Louise again returned to civic life in 2012 when she was elected to serve Washington South Ward until her retirement in 2023.

During her time as a councillor Louise was a member on many Council Committees including Washington Area Committee, Human Resource Committee, Sunderland Adults Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and Corporate Parenting Board (now Supporting Parenting Partnership), and the School Organisation Committee.

More prominently Louise was appointed to the role of Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Children, Learning and Skills in 2016, a role she held until her retirement in 2023.

She represented the Council on a number of outside bodies including Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, North East Child Poverty Commission, Sunderland AFC Foundation Partnership Board, Tyne and Wear Pension Fund and Sunderland Safeguarding Children's Board.

Louise was also a school governor during her time in office, at Oxclose Nursery, Houghton Kepier, Burnside Primary and more recently Rickleton Primary School.

5. Financial Implications

The costs associated with this proposal are estimated to be circa £4,000 which will be met from the Council's general contingency provision. This includes the cost of the memorabilia given to each of nominees as well as the cost of the ceremony itself. There are a number of variables relating to the cost of the ceremony and these will become clearer once preparations commence, including potentially to hold a joint ceremony at which the appointments of the Honorary Alderman, Alderwoman and conferring of the Freedom of the City on proposed recipients will take place.

6. Reasons for the Decision

The appointments to the position of Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman are a fitting way to formally recognise the distinguished service of former Councillors, both to the Council and to the City of Sunderland.

7. Alternative Options

To make no appointments to the position of Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman. This option is not recommended as it would fail to take an opportunity for the Council to recognise and celebrate the significant contribution made to civic life through the distinguished service of these former Councillors.

