

CABINET – 14 SEPTEMBER 2013

APPOINTMENT OF ALDERMEN

Report of the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services

1. Purpose of the Report

To propose arrangements for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

To recommend to Council arrangements for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen for the Council of the City of Sunderland.

3. Introduction/Background

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 Borough persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Borough; and
- (ii) confer the title of Honorary Alderman upon persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Council as past councillors.

4. Current Position

While Sunderland Council has an established practice of granting Freedom of the City to distinguished individuals who have contributed to civic life, and to the armed forces, the Council has not previously had any arrangement for awarding the recognition for service to the Council that is conferred by the title of Honorary Alderman.

It is now timely to consider, in the context of the council's community leadership work, how the council may want to recognise distinguished service to the council, the city and its communities, by former Members. 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.

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.

5. Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for the Council to recognise formally the distinguished service of former councillors, to both the Council and to the City of Sunderland.

6. Alternative Options

To maintain no formal arrangement that recognises the distinguished service of former councillors. This option is not recommended as it would fail to embrace the opportunity presented through such formal arrangements for the Council and the city to recognise and celebrate the contribution made to civic life through the distinguished service of former councillors.

7. Impact Analysis

- 7(a) Equalities** - The proposed arrangement will contribute to the promotion of civic values of fairness and decency.
- 7(b) Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)** –administrative arrangements will safeguard the privacy of potential nominees until such time as nominations for the title of Honorary Alderman are made public.
- 7(c) Sustainability** – The proposals will promote and, in its broadest sense, sustain contributions to civic life.
- 7(d) Reduction of Crime and Disorder – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion** – The proposals support promotion of community cohesion through civic leadership.

8. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

The Leaders of the principal political groups have been consulted and indicate their support for the proposals

11. Background Papers

none

SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

SCHEME FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN

PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME

This scheme sets out the arrangements Sunderland City Council has decided it will apply when Council exercises its power to appoint Honorary Aldermen contained in Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Council has decided that it will confer this Honorary title in recognition of the exceptional services to the City and its people that have been provided by those past Members of the Council that Council may select for the honour.

WHO CAN BE AN HONORARY ALDERMAN?

The title of Honorary Alderman can only be conferred on former Members of the Council who are not Councillors at the time the title is conferred.

The title is awarded to those former Councillors who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council.

The following criteria will be considered when nominations are put forward, but will be applied flexibly and as a non-exclusive list of criteria that are relevant when considering the service of past members of the Council with a view to appointing them Alderman.

- Distinguished service in the Council Chamber
- Distinguished service to Council committees, boards, panels and working groups
- Service that is notable for achieving improvements in the community
- Notable achievements in helping to develop and promote the growth of new Councillors in their role
- Eminent service contributing to the broader civic life of the City

It is not anticipated that appointments will be made in each civic year, since election to the roll of Honorary Alderman is an honour that will not be conferred lightly or as a matter of routine.

Group Leaders are, however, recommended to give consideration to selection of potential nominees at the start of each civic year to allow for early recognition of the contribution made by Members who have recently office. Group Leaders will seek, together, to arrive at agreement regarding nominations to be put forward to Council. Group Leaders will advise the Chief Executive of nominations and, provided it appears that there is majority support for the nomination, and the nominee is content for their name to be put forward, a report will be submitted to the next Council meeting for the Council to decide whether it wishes to convene a special meeting for appointment of Aldermen.

If an Alderman decides to resume their political role and stand as a candidate for election to the Council, they will no longer hold the position of Honorary Alderman. Entitlement to the position will end with immediate effect if they are still standing as a candidate immediately following the deadline for withdrawal of candidates.

The title may also be withdrawn on a formal motion to full Council which sets out the reasons for the proposal to withdraw, if this is supported by not less than two thirds of the Members present and voting at the Council meeting.

THE ROLE OF ALDERMAN

The role of an Honorary Alderman is a non-political civic honorary role. It is not compatible with continuing political activity, other than campaigning work on matters that do not bring the Alderman into conflict with the council.

Those nominated are recognised for their individual contribution to the activities of the Council and the wellbeing of the people of the city. As such, the Council recognises the value of the contribution they have and may continue to wish to make to civic life. The Mayor may therefore, from time to time, seek the support of one or more of the city's Aldermen in promoting the civic interests of the city, through activities such as providing a civic welcome and hospitality and attending at events on the Mayor's behalf.

An Alderman is entitled to attend and take their honorary seat in the chamber at Council meetings, and to make use of some of the facilities available for Members at the Civic Centre.

APPOINTMENT

Honorary Aldermen are appointed by a resolution of the Council passed at a meeting that has been specially convened to consider the appointment(s). Appointments must be approved by not less than two thirds of the councillors voting at the meeting.

At the conferment ceremony a certificate and badge of office will be presented to each newly appointed Honorary Alderman.

PRIVILEGES

As an eminent former Member of the Council, each Honorary Alderman is entitled to the following privileges;

- To be named in the Roll of Honorary Aldermen of the City of Sunderland
- To take and be addressed by the courtesy title of Alderman
- To take their seat in the Council Chamber (although they have no vote and do not contribute to debate)
- To walk in civic procession in a position immediately senior to the current Members
- Use of the Members' rooms and of the Members' dining room
- Use of the Civic Centre car park when undertaking their duties as Alderman
- Use of an ID card, fob and locker in the Members' rooms.
- Invitation to major civic ceremonies and events
- Invitation at the Mayor's discretion to civic events, or to represent the Mayor where the Alderman's knowledge and experience would assist the Mayor in their civic role