

By: Alex King, Deputy Leader of the Council
Director of Law and Governance

To: Selection and Member Services Committee – 23 January 2009

Subject: Appointment of Honorary Aldermen

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the procedure and criteria to appoint Honorary Aldermen and seeks the Committee's views on the way forward.

FOR DECISION

1) At the meeting of this Committee on 8 October 2008 a report was requested on the procedures for appointing Honorary Aldermen of the Council.

2) Under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 "a principal Council may, by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the Members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, confer the title of Honorary Alderman on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past Members of that Council, but who are not then Members of the Council".

3) There is no statutory guidance on definition of "eminent services", although it is recommended that each Council should have its own criteria for an appointment and on that basis the following criteria are suggested for approval:

- The title may be conferred on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered "eminent services" to the Council as past Members, but who are no longer serving Members;
- There shall be no specific definition of "eminent services", it being left to the discretion of the Council at the time to assess and recognise any individual's contribution to the activities of the Council and the wellbeing of the county of Kent;
- Nominees would normally require a minimum period of 12 years past service as a Member of the Council;
- In accordance with Section 249 of the 1972 Act, nominees would have to receive the support of not less than two-thirds of the Members voting thereon at a Special Council meeting convened for the purpose.
- Nominations can be made by any Group Leader. However, before proceeding, officers and Members should, via the party groups, establish whether or not the nomination would be likely to receive sufficient support to proceed;

- Honorary Aldermen should be invited to relevant civic ceremonial events, including the Annual Council meeting, the Chairman's Civic Reception, and any future appointment of Honorary Aldermen;
- The status of Honorary Aldermen carries no special right to attend or address meetings of the Council or its Committees or to receive any allowances or payments to which serving Members are entitled. However, at the discretion of the Chairman, a nominee for Honorary Alderman may (if present) be invited to respond to the vote conferring that status;

4) Members are invited to recommend to the Council that the criteria for appointing Honorary Aldermen of the Council be approved. Subject to approval of the criteria, nominations will be sought and agreed with Group Leaders prior to the arrangement of a Special Council meeting.

Geoff Wild
Director of Law and Governance
01622 694302
geoff.wild@kent.gov.uk

Mary Cooper
Committee Manager
01622 694354
mary.cooper@kent.gov.uk