

By: Director of Law and Governance
To: Selection and Member Services Committee – 8 October 2008
Subject: OFFICE OF DIGNITY
Classification: Unrestricted

1. (1) At the meeting of this Committee on 4 July 2008 Members requested that I prepare a report on Honorary Appointments that could be bestowed upon individuals.

(2) There are several honorary appointments that are capable of being bestowed upon individuals by local authorities. Included among these are the statutory positions of High Steward, Honorary Recorder, Honorary Freeman and Honorary Alderman.

(3) However, the only statutory 'Office of Dignity' that can be awarded by an English County Council is that of Honorary Alderman. Moreover, this appointment is only available to persons who have rendered eminent services to the council as past members of the council, but who are no longer councillors.

(4) All other statutory honorary appointments are the preserves of city, borough, district, parish and even Welsh (but not English) county councils.

(5) This was one of the reasons KCC introduced the Kent Invicta Award, in order "to bestow [it] upon outstanding people from across the County who demonstrate the highest standards of outstanding achievement, courage, determination or brilliance in their chosen field".

(6) Despite the limited availability of awards at its disposal, it would appear as though the one Office of Dignity that is open to the county council to bestow is under-utilised at present and could be brought into greater use through the adoption by the council of a policy whereby past Members, perhaps having served for a certain length of time, would automatically be considered for the award.

Recommendation

2. Members' views are sought on the way forward.

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