

Extraordinary Meeting of the Council – 20th June, 2023

Report of the Chief Executive

Appointment of Honorary Freeman/Women and Honorary Aldermen/Women

Purpose

1. To invite the Council to make any Honorary Freeman/Women and Honorary Aldermen/Women appointments pursuant to Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Recommendations

2. That the Council determine whether to appoint any Honorary Freeman/Women of the Borough.
3. That the Council determine whether to confer the title of Honorary Alderman/Woman.
4. That the Chief Executive be authorised to make any necessary arrangements regarding the future presentation of the awards.

Background

Honorary Freeman/Women

5. Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Council may, by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting thereon, appoint to be an Honorary Freeman/Woman of the Borough, persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough.

6. The criteria for appointment as an Honorary Freeman/Woman of the Borough were agreed by the Council on 25th February, 2013 as follows:
 - (a) A branch of the armed forces with a particular connection with the Borough.
 - (b) Any person born in the Borough or with a particular connection with the Borough who has made an eminent contribution to charity or voluntary work locally, nationally or internationally.
 - (c) Any person born in the Borough or with a particular connection with the Borough who has made an eminent contribution to the life of the Borough or to the nation, in the fields of culture, medicine, science, social care, the economy, education, public service, politics, sport or entertainment.
7. The Council would also take account of whether an individual has received an honour from His Majesty the King or any other prestigious award.

Honorary Aldermen/Women

8. Section 249 (1) of the Local Government Act, 1972 provides that the Council may, by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting on it at a meeting specially convened for the purpose, confer the title of Honorary Alderman/Woman on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council but who are not then serving Councillors.
9. As reported to the Council on 28th February, 2022, it has been agreed that in normal circumstances, persons will only be nominated for the position of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman if they have previously served on the Council for a minimum of 12 years (or 3 terms of office). This does not, however, preclude the Council from considering any nominations where a person has served as a Councillor for less than 12 years. The Council retains sole discretion to determine if it wishes to confer the honorary titles where it considers that a person has rendered eminent services to the Council.
10. Should the Council resolve to appoint any Honorary Freeman/Women or Honorary Aldermen/Women of the Borough, it has been customary that a presentation ceremony be held to award the honour.

Finance

11. The costs involved with decisions to make any Freedom of the Borough or Honorary Alderman/Woman appointments will need to be identified from within existing budgetary provisions.

Law

12. The legal powers are contained in Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 1972. This Section does not expressly address the award of posthumous titles. Conferring an honorary title does not grant any rights that exist after the death of the person concerned. On this basis, it is considered that the Council has powers to consider the award of a posthumous honorary title based on the merits of each individual case.

Risk Management

13. There are no implications for the Council's Risk Management Framework.

Equality Impact

14. There are no implications for the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

15. Any decisions will be administered within existing resources.

Commercial/Procurement

16. There are no implications for the Council's objectives to maximise value from procurement, deliver social value and develop a commercial focus.

Environment/Climate Change

17. There are no direct implications relating to the Council's commitment to environmental sustainability and tackling climate change.

Council Priorities and Projects

18. There are no implications in relation to the Borough Vision, the Council Plan or the Future Council Programme.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K O'Keefe', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kevin O'Keefe
Chief Executive