

	<p>REPORT TO CABINET TO BE HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2019</p>	
	<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Corporate Priority</p> <p>To be an efficient and effective Council which is financially sustainable for the future</p>	<p>Cabinet Portfolio Holder</p>	<p>Cllr Turner – Portfolio Holder for Communities</p>

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (LD) – 19/007

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF HONORARY ALDERMEN CRITERIA

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Council be recommended to approve a revised criterion for conferring the title of Honorary Alderman, that is:

- Past Members of the Council who have a minimum of 16 years' service with the Borough Council or a predecessor authority

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Following a review of the Council's current criteria, to ensure a fair, consistent and inclusive approach to recognising 'eminent services' rendered to the Council by past Members in accordance with the powers conferred by Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 contains the following powers:

"The council of a district having the status of a borough may, by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting hereon at a meeting of the council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, admit to be aldermen of the borough persons of distinction and 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 councillors of the council."

1.2 Conferment of these titles enables the recipients to attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council might determine but does not involve the right to participate in meetings or receive any allowances or payments.

1.3 Scarborough Borough Council has previously agreed that the qualifying criteria for Honorary Aldermen are:-

- (a) a minimum of 16 years' service with the Borough Council or a predecessor authority; and
- (b) whilst a member of Scarborough Borough Council, service either as the Mayor, a Group Leader or the Chairman of a main committee.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 To be an efficient and effective Council which is financially sustainable for the future.

3. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

3.1 When the Council last considered whether to confer the title of Honorary Aldermen on several candidates in September 2015 according to the above criteria, some Members suggested that the criteria should be reviewed, with a view to establishing a fairer honours system to recognise the contribution of former councillors.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 The proposals in this report have been discussed with the cross-party Governance Working Group.

5. ASSESSMENT

5.1 The Local Government Act does not define 'eminent services' to the Council and it is therefore at the discretion of individual councils to determine what this might constitute for their individual authority.

5.2 A review of a range of other local authorities demonstrates that two common criteria for the conferment of the title are:

- Minimum length of service (consecutive or otherwise) – 16 years (four electoral terms), 12 years (three electoral terms) or 8 years (two electoral terms)

This criterion is in some authorities used **alone**, or in others in conjunction with another criterion such as:

- Held a significant position of public responsibility within the council: Mayor, Group Leader, Cabinet Member, Committee chair or any position which attracted a Special Responsibility Allowance

5.3 In reflecting what constitutes ‘eminent services’, some councils have considered alternative, more qualitative criteria such as:

- Has made a significant contribution to public life
- Has given notable service on behalf of the Council, which has enhanced the reputation of Councillors and the Council itself
- A key role in achieving a significant Council objective
- Involvement in activity which has contributed, in a distinctive way, to improving the lives of the people of the Borough

5.4 The advantages of adopting this qualitative approach are that:

- It avoids the possibility of an Honorary Title being conferred on Members whose efforts in Office may not warrant it;
- It renders the Honorary Title more valuable, in that it is not simply earned through the passage of time;

5.5 The disadvantages are that:

- It may be regarded as vulnerable to subjective assessment or partisan interpretation;
- The purpose of the power is arguably to show respect and appreciation to people who have been voted into office for a number of years to serve their community. Such a process could be marred by partisan debates in judgement of the quality of the service of the Member concerned;
- Members may consider that the repeated re-election of the prospective candidate for title, by the electorate, is sufficiently objective criteria.

5.6 A further option is to employ **both** quantitative and qualitative criteria, for example:

1. Minimum length of service (consecutive or otherwise) – 16 years

AND

2. (i) Held a significant position of public responsibility within the council: Mayor, Group Leader, Cabinet Member, Committee chair; **and/or**

(ii) Has made a significant contribution to public life

5.7 Introduction of more qualitative criteria would then require a nomination process to ensure that nominees (or their sponsors) were given the opportunity to evidence criteria 2(ii) 'Has made a significant contribution to public life'. The Chief Executive would then consult with the Leader of the Council, Group Leaders, and the Monitoring Officer to ensure there was a sufficient degree of support for the conferment of the title.

5.8 The cross-party Governance Working Group considered these options at its meeting on 12 December and decided in the interests of fairness, consistency, inclusivity and objectivity (so as to eliminate any risk of partisan disagreement), to recommend that the Council simplifies its current criteria to the following:

- Past Members of the Council who have a minimum of 16 years' service with the Borough Council or a predecessor authority

5.9 It was felt by Members that this is more inclusive than the current approach by removing the criterion that the Member must have served either as the Mayor, a Group Leader or the Chairman of a main committee. In other words, the proposed new criterion simply reflects the principle that the repeated re-election of the prospective Honorary Alderman candidates by the electorate over at least four terms (or the equivalent), is a sufficiently objective and reliable measure of the 'eminent services' they have rendered to the Council. The Cabinet is therefore asked to recommend this revision to the Council for approval.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Policy

6.1 None

Financial

6.2 None

Legal

6.3 None

Communications

6.4 Since this is an administrative governance matter, it was not deemed appropriate to publicise the proposals beyond the publication of this report.

Others

- 6.5 I have considered whether there are any Sustainability, Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety, and Environmental implications arising from this report and am satisfied that there is no identified implication that will arise from this decision.



Lisa Dixon
Director

Author: St John Harris, Democratic Services Manager
Telephone No: 01723 383556 E-mail address: stjohn.harris@scarborough.gov.uk

Background Papers:
None

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT OR WISH TO INSPECT ANY OF THE BACKGROUND PAPERS, PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR.

Risk Matrix

Risk Ref	Date	Risk	Consequences	Mitigation	Current Risk Score	Target Score	Service Unit Manager/ Responsible Officer	Action Plan
1	February 2019	That the current criteria for conferring the title of Honorary Aldermen may exclude deserving, long serving past Members of the Council	The Council and the title may suffer reputational damage	Adoption of the new single criterion	B2	A2	Democratic Services Manager	For implementation at the start of the new Council in May 2019

Glossary of Terms

Risk

An event which may prevent the Council achieving its objectives

Consequences

The outcome if the risk materialised

Mitigation

The processes and procedures that are in place to reduce the risk

Current Risk Score

The likelihood and impact score with the current mitigation measures in place

Corporate Objectives

An assessment of the Corporate Objectives that are affected by the risk identified.

Target Risk Score

The likelihood and impact score that the Council is aiming to achieve

Service Unit Manager

The Service Unit or Officer responsible for managing the risk

Action Plan

The proposed actions to be implemented in order to reduce the risk to the target score

Risk Scoring

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		A	B	C	D	E
	Likelihood					

Likelihood:

A = Very Low

B = Not Likely

C = Likely

D = Very Likely

E = Almost Certain

Impact

1 = Low

2 = Minor

3 = Medium

4 = Major

5 = Disaster