
HONORARY ALDERMAN

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor John Williams, Leader

Responsible Director - Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the feasibility of recognising the service of former Councillors Mrs. Brown and Hutchinson by bestowing the title of 'Honorary Alderman' on each of the two former Members.

Background

2. At the Council meeting on 19th April, 2007, Members paid tribute to the long service of former Councillors and it was anticipated that there would be some recognition after the election for those with long service.

Bestowing the Title of 'Honorary Alderman'

3. The Council currently has one Honorary Alderman, ex-Councillor Jim Skinner, who served for 41 years on the Council. This honour of Honorary Alderman was given at a Special Council Meeting in May 1996 to mark both his retirement from the Council and for the service he had given to education.
4. Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that the title of 'Honorary Alderman' should be given to 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.'
5. Should Members wish to consider bestowing the title of 'Honorary Alderman' on recently retired Members with similar service to Alderman Skinner, it would be appropriate to bestow such an honour on former Councillors Mrs. Brown and Hutchinson. Councillors Mrs. Brown and Hutchinson have 41 and 44 years service on the Council respectively.
6. An Honorary Alderman is encouraged to attend all civic ceremonial events when invited; promote civic pride in the Borough; and attend Council meetings (without voting rights).
7. Whilst there is a certain amount of flexibility in the detailed arrangements, should it be decided to bestow the title of 'Honorary Alderman' on the two individuals, it would be essential that the Council make the formal decision on bestowing the honour well in advance of the ceremony itself. This Council meeting could agree the proposal, with the ceremony being held later in the year.

8. As far as the actual ceremony is concerned, it would be a Special Council meeting (on similar lines to the Annual Council meeting). The formal recommendation would be put to the meeting and must be agreed by no less than two-thirds of the voting Members present.
9. The arrangements for speeches would be organised in a similar format as the Mayor-making ceremony and the former Councillors could be presented with a scroll to recognise the honour and an appropriate gift.
10. Following the ceremony, a buffet could be provided in the Dolphin Centre Central Hall for those in attendance at the Ceremony.
11. It is estimated the cost of an event would be in the region of £2,000.

Outcome of Consultation

12. Consultation has been undertaken with the Leaders of each of the political groups on the Council and also with the independent member, and all are in favour of recognising the long service.

Legal Implications

13. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

14. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

15. The issues contained within this report are required to be considered by Council.

Conclusion

16. This report suggests that two former Councillors should be recognised for the service they have given to Darlington Borough Council. It is suggested that Council agree the proposal to bestow the title of 'Honorary Alderman' on the two former Councillors at this meeting to enable Officers to plan the detailed arrangements.

Recommendation

17. That Council agree to bestow the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillors Mrs. Brown and Hutchinson.

Reason

18. The recommendation is supported by the following reason :-

To recognise the long service of the two former Councillors.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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