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| Title of Report: | Recognition of Former Councillors |
| Report to be considered by: | Council |
| Date of Meeting: | 22 September 2011 |
| Forward Plan Ref: | C2326 |

Purpose of Report: To consider introducing a scheme which will enable this Council to recognise former Councillors who have provided eminent service to this Council over a long period of time.

Recommended Action: That Council agree to invoke Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable this Council to recognise eminent service provided by former Councillors by conferring on them the title of Honorary Alderman.

Reason for decision to be taken: To ensure that eminent service is recognised formally by this Council.

Other options considered: N/A

Key background documentation: Local Government Act 1972

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme:

CPT14 - Effective People

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

Recognising eminent service provided by existing and former Councillors.

| Portfolio Member Details | |
|---|--|
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| Date Portfolio Member agreed report: | 2 July 2011 |

| Contact Officer Details | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
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Implications

Policy: This proposal will accord with the Council's policy of wishing to recognise those who contribute to the success of the Council.

Financial: The cost of purchasing a scroll from a specialist is in the region of £600 each so it is proposed to ask the graphics section to produce this in house. A scroll holder can then be purchased at a nominal cost. It will also be necessary to establish an "Honorary Alderman" Board similar to those boards currently located outside the Council Chamber recognising the appointment of Chairmen and Chief Executives. The purchase of this board should be no more than £300.

Finally, provided any special meeting is held on the night of a scheduled Council meeting no additional Member travel costs will need to be met.

Personnel: N/A

Legal/Procurement: This proposal accords with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Property: N/A

Risk Management: N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment: Stage 1 EIA completed

| Is this item subject to call-in? | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> | No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box: | | |
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Executive Summary and Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2010 the Council introduced the Staff Recognition Event which seeks to recognise the performance of members of staff in the following categories:

Long Service - 25 and 35 years

Professional Qualifications

Peer Awards (Apprentice, Innovation, Volunteer, Contribution to the Community, Team, Colleague and overall WBC Employee of the Year).

- 1.2 At the recent Annual Council meeting mention was made of the departure, either through the local elections or for other reasons, of former Councillors who had served on this Council, in some instances, for a significant period of time. There is currently no formal way of recognising this service. The Leader of the Council therefore requested that consideration be given to introducing a scheme which formally recognised eminent service rendered by former Councillors.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a Principal Council (of which WBC is) to confer the title of Honorary Aldermen on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Council as past members of that Council, but who are not then members of the Council.

- 2.2 In conferring the title of Honorary Alderman, a resolution would need to be passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members present at a meeting of the Council specially convened for that purpose. No other business could be transacted at that meeting.

- 2.3 The Council could ask Honorary Aldermen to take part in civic services or nominate them to represent the Council on outside bodies where an elected Member is not required. This would help to confirm to the individual outside body that the Council values their organisation by virtue of nominating an Honorary Alderman to represent the Council.

- 2.4 Honorary Alderman would not be permitted to:

(a) take part in meetings of the council or a committee of the council (including a joint committee upon which they are represented); or

(b) receive any such allowances or other payments as are payable under sections 173 to 176 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 2.4 It is usual when conferring the title of Honorary Alderman to present them with a certificate and case. The cost of procuring a certificate from a specialist would be in the region of £600. It is therefore proposed to produce this certificate in house and to procure a scroll holder at a nominal cost. There will also be a need to establish an "Honorary Alderman" Board similar to those boards currently located outside the Council Chamber which recognise the Chairman of Council and Chief Executives. This is not expected to cost more than £300.00.

3.0 Qualification for Title

- 3.1 Conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on a former Councillor is a prestigious title and should not therefore be used lightly. It is clear from Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 that anyone being conferred with the title of Honorary Alderman must have rendered eminent service.
- 3.2 There is no specific definition of “eminent service”, it being left to the discretion of the Council to assess and recognise any individual’s contribution to the activities of the Council and the wellbeing of West Berkshire. However, it is suggested that the following may be considered “normal” Councillor duties so eminent service would need to exceed these.
- (i) represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision making process; ie become the advocate of and for their communities;
 - (ii) effectively represent the interests of their ward and of individual constituents;
 - (iii) balance different interests identified within the ward and represent the ward as a whole;
 - (iv) participate in the governance and management of the Council;
 - (v) be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and
 - (vi) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.
- 3.3 To this end it is suggested that to qualify for this title a former Member should have served a period of time and provided outstanding/exceptional service to the Council and/or to the Community in general.
- 3.4 It is suggested that nominations should be considered by a small Panel of Independent people. However, before asking the Panel to consider any nominations the Leaders should, via the party groups, establish whether or not any nomination would be likely to receive sufficient support to proceed. As part of the process the Group Leaders should also confer about potential nominations so that where possible support is obtained between across both Groups. It is important that this process is not politicised.
- 3.5 In suggesting that the Council introduce the title of Honorary Alderman into its overall governance structures, it is also suggested that for those former Members of the Council who do not qualify for this title that they be recognised by the presentation of a certificate and/or paper weight at the Annual Meeting of Council.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 In order to recognise service of former Councillors it is suggested that the following be introduced:

- (i) That for those former Members who are deemed to have provided eminent service over a period of time and have provided outstanding/exceptional service to the Council or to the community in general that the title of Honorary Alderman be bestowed on them in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- (ii) For those former Members who do not qualify for the title of Honorary Alderman their service be recognised by the presentation of a certificate and/or a paper weight at the Annual Meeting of Council.

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Scheme for the Appointment of Honorary Alderman and Criteria

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: N/A

Officers Consulted: Corporate Board, Jo Watt, Moira Fraser

Trade Union: N/A

SCHEME FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN

1. The Panel, which shall consist of the two Group Leaders and the Chairman of Council, shall have the duty of submitting, from time to time, to the full Council, the names of past Members of the Council who, in the opinion of the Panel, have rendered eminent services to the Council and on whom should be conferred the title of "Honorary Alderman" in accordance with the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.
2. When the Panel has approved such a recommendation, the Head of Policy and Communication, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, shall convene a special meeting of the Council for the purposes of considering the proposition that the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred on the person or persons recommended by the Committee.
3. The resolution of the Council conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on a former Member shall be suitably engrossed and embodied in a Roll of Honorary Aldermen of West Berkshire Council.
4. The Roll of Honorary Aldermen shall be kept by the Head of Policy and Communication.
5. An Honorary Alderman of West Berkshire Council shall enjoy such privileges as may properly be conferred by the Council from time to time and in particular shall be entitled to:
 - (1) attend civic receptions and other civic functions or ceremonies to which all Members of the Council are invited; and
 - (2) attend meeting of the Council and to be allocated a seat in the Council Chamber;

CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMAN :

Any former Councillor nominated must have given eminent service to the Council over and above a Councillor's normal duties (as set out below). In particular they must have:

- (a) Served as a Councillor for a period of time
- (b) rendered eminent, or notable, service generally or by service as Chairman, or a Chairman of a major Council Committee or holding one or more senior positions on the council

Councillors “Normal Duties”

- (i) represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision making process; ie become the advocate of and for their communities;
- (ii) effectively represent the interests of their ward and of individual constituents;
- (iii) balance different interests identified within the ward and represent the ward as a whole;
- (iv) participate in the governance and management of the Council;
- (v) be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and
- (vi) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.