

# **Appointment of Honorary Aldermen – Agreement of Criteria and Rights**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Carol Goodall, Environmental Health, Health and Safety, Democratic Services, Member Training.  
*Assistant Director:* Ian Clarke, Legal and Corporate Services  
*Lead Officer:* Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager  
*Contact Details:* angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462148

## **1. Purpose of Report**

This report seeks approval for the criteria and procedure to appoint Honorary Aldermen and to extend their civic rights.

## **2. Public Interest**

The title of Honorary Alderman can be conferred on 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. The position of Honorary Alderman is non-political and the title is nominated and agreed by a majority of their fellow Councillors.

## **2. Recommendation**

That the District Executive recommend to Council to:-

- a) Review and agree the criteria for appointing Honorary Aldermen of the Council and agree to hold a Special meeting in September 2015 to make the appointments.
- b) Agree to extend the rights of Honorary Aldermen as listed in paragraph 5.
- c) Agree that the funding for the annual season tickets be found from unallocated revenue balances and added to the medium term financial plan.

## **3. Background**

Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states "that a principal council may, by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting thereon, at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, confer the title of honorary alderman on 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 members of the Council."

There is no statutory guidance or definition of "eminent services" although it is recommended that each Council should have its own criteria for the appointment. Bearing in mind the current local government review, arrangements would be looked at in respect of the position and status of such a designation should there be a change to the existing council structures in South Somerset. In deciding whether "eminent services" have been provided by a councillor, services by a councillor to a predecessor Authority can be taken into account.

The current criteria for appointment was agreed in July 2007 and it is appropriate that that it is reviewed again prior to any appointments to be made in 2015.

#### **4. Criteria for Aldermen**

The proposed criteria for conferring the title honorary alderman is recommended as follows:

- (a) the title would be conferred on persons who have, in the opinion of the District Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past members, but who are no longer serving councillors.
- (b) Nominees would have a minimum period of 12 years past service as a Councillor of the District Council.
- (c) Nominations would have to receive the support of not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a Special meeting of the Council convened for the purpose.
- (d) Nominations can be made by any Party Group Leader. However, before proceeding, officers and members would, via the party groups, establish whether or not the nomination would be likely to receive sufficient support to proceed, as per criteria (c) above.

(In exceptional cases the Council may agree to waive paragraph (b) above)

#### **5. Rights of Honorary Aldermen**

Honorary Aldermen have no 'legal or social precedence' but it is custom and practice that they are invited to all Civic ceremonial events. Historically, this has meant an invitation to the annual Chairman's Civic Reception, however, it is now proposed to extend this to:-

- invitation to the Chairman's Civic Reception
- invitation to any future appointment of Honorary Aldermen.
- a commemorative badge to be worn at Civic Events
- use of the Members' Room in the District Council Offices (inc. building access card)
- annual parking permit for all SSDC car parks
- invited to represent the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Council when they are unable to attend a Civic Event.
- invitation to SSDC events such as opening ceremonies or presentation evenings (All Star Awards and opening of new facilities)
- £100 gift voucher per year towards Octagon Theatre tickets

The Aldermen have no right to attend meetings of the Council or its committees or to receive any allowances or payments to which serving councillors are entitled.

#### **6. Proposed Arrangements for Appointment**

If agreed, then arrangements will be made for a special Council meeting to be held in September on the same date as the ordinary meeting that month. Prior to that meeting nominations will be sought and agreed with Group Leaders.

## 7. Financial Implications

The costs involved in this proposal will be the costs of a commemorative medal or insignia and the cost of any invitation taken up by appointed Aldermen to attend civic events. Their names would also be displayed on the Board of Honour in the Council Chamber. These costs can be met from within existing Legal and Democratic Services budgets.

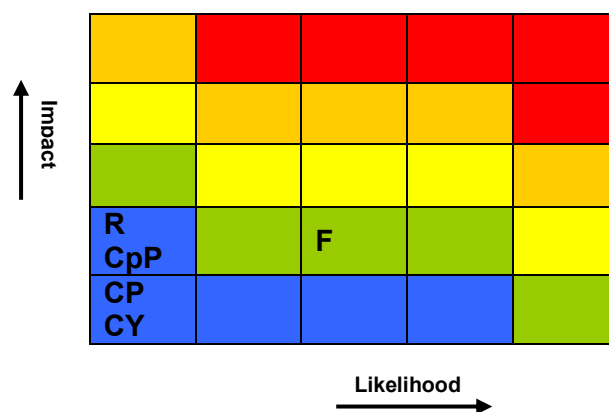
Further costs for the Octagon Theatre tickets and car parking passes is dependent upon the number of Aldermen appointed. There are currently 4 appointed Honorary Aldermen which would cost £400 for the Octagon Theatre tickets, which can be met within the existing Legal and Democratic Services budgets.

The cost of the car parking passes, based on the most expensive season ticket sold (for Petters Way/Court Ash car parks) is £1,680p.a. per pass.

At the current time, the income for season tickets is not meeting its target, therefore the costs of these season tickets for the Aldermen would not be able to be met from within the existing budget. If members agree to this, the funding would need to be found from unallocated revenue balances and added to the medium term financial plan.

However, it is reasonable to assume that not all Aldermen would use their pass in this manner and the loss of car parking income would be more likely in the region of £500p.a for all Aldermen.

## 8. Risk Matrix



### Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

## 9. Implications for Corporate Priorities

9.1 None.

## **10. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 None.

## **11. Equality and Diversity Implications**

11.1 All councillors are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and we are determined to ensure that councillors receive fair and equitable treatment.

## **12. Privacy Impact Assessment**

12.1 No implications.

## **13. Background Papers**

Appointment of Honorary Aldermen report to Council – July 2007

Appointment of Honorary Aldermen report to Council – September 2011

---