

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Constitution Committee

Date of Meeting: 17 September 2015
Report of: Head of Governance and Democratic Services
Subject/Title: Appointment of Honorary Aldermen and Freemen

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report follows a discussion at Civic Sub Committee on 8 September 2015 and makes recommendations endorsed by the Sub Committee in relation to the convening of a Special meeting of Council to appoint Honorary Aldermen and Freemen.
- 1.2 The report also summaries who can be appointed to these positions and the rights and privileges that they enjoy.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That a Special Meeting of Council is convened on Thursday 17 December 2015 to enable Honorary Aldermen and Freemen to be appointed as proposed in paragraphs 10.5 to 10.8 of this report.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To enable the Council to appoint new Honorary Aldermen and Freemen in accordance with Council policy and the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All Wards.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 There are no policy implications.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 There would be a modest cost associated with convening a Special Meeting of Council and hosting a Civic Reception. These costs would be met from

existing budgets. A regular meeting of Council will take place on 17 December; holding the two meetings on the same day will significantly reduce costs.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 There are no risk management implications

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows Local Authorities such as Cheshire East to appoint both Honorary Freeman and Honorary Aldermen. The criteria for appointment as Freeman is that an individual should be a “person of distinction” and have “rendered eminent service to the place or area”. The criteria for appointment as an Alderman are that an individual “should have rendered eminent service to the Council as [a] past Member of that Council”. There is no bar on an individual being both an Honorary Freeman and an Honorary Aldermen.

10.2 Those individuals or organisations who were Freeman of any of the three demised Boroughs automatically became Freeman of Cheshire East on 1 April 2009. Since its creation in 2009 Cheshire East has appointed seven individuals as Freeman (all 2012 Olympic or Paralympic medallists) together with the Mercian Regiment. The former County Council could not appoint Freeman. Seven former Members of Cheshire East became Honorary Aldermen following the 2011 elections.

10.3 Cheshire East policy in relation to the appointment of Honorary Aldermen is that a former Member must have served for a minimum of ten years (including service on one of the four demised authorities) and / or have served as Leader or Mayor of Cheshire East.

10.4 The Local Government Act specifies that both Honorary Freeman and Honorary Aldermen must be appointed at a Special Meeting of Council, with the appointment being endorsed by a two thirds majority of those Members in attendance at the meeting.

10.5 There are a number of former Members whose service on Cheshire East and / or one of the demised authorities would qualify them for appointment as an Honorary Alderman; these individuals are:

- David Brickhill
- Roy Cartlidge
- Ken Edwards
- Wesley Fitzgerald
- Shirley Jones

- Frank Keegan
- Peggy Martin
- Brendan Murphy
- David Neilson
- Andrew Thwaite
- David Topping
- Roger West

10.6 The Leader indicated at a meeting of Council earlier in the year that he wished to see a number of Members who were standing down from the Council, appointed as Freeman of the Borough. Those Members named by the Leader all satisfy the test of having rendered eminent service to Cheshire East. The now former Members are:

- Carolyn Andrew
- David Brickhill
- Roland Domleo
- Shirley Jones
- Chris Thorley
- David Topping
- Steve Wilkinson

10.7 It will be noted that former Councillors Brickhill, Jones and Topping would, if the recommendations of Civic Sub Committee are followed, be appointed to the position of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Freeman, which is permissible. It is suggested that the Special Meeting of Council is structured in such a way as to first appoint Honorary Aldermen and then conclude with the appointment of Honorary Freeman, meaning that in effect there would be two separate ceremonies held within the Special Meeting of Council.

10.8 Civic Sub Committee endorsed the names listed in paragraphs 10.5 and 10.6 above, and were of the view that the most appropriate date for a Special meeting of Council would be Thursday 17 December; the day of a scheduled meeting of Council. If the Special Meeting of Council were held in the morning a short Civic Reception could be held at lunchtime, followed by the regular meeting of Council in the afternoon.

10.9 Cheshire East policy, endorsed by Council in 2010, is that Honorary Freeman and Aldermen enjoy a limited range of privileges; these are:

- The right to attend meetings of Council;
- The right to be kept updated about the work of the Borough;
- The right to be invited to civic events (an example would be the Mayor's Civic Service); and
- Two free tickets for the RHS and Cheshire Shows each year.

10.10 Honorary Freeman and Aldermen are not eligible to claim any expenses.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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