

To: Council
Date: 23 April 2018
Report of: Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: Scheme for the enrolment of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen of Oxford City Council

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	This report sets out a proposed scheme for the enrolment of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen of Oxford City Council
Key decision:	No
Executive Board Member	Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council
Corporate Priority:	None
Policy Framework:	None
Legislation:	Local Government Act 1972 (Section 249)
Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
1. Adopt the Scheme for the enrolment of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen of Oxford City Council, attached at Appendix 1.	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Scheme for the enrolment of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen of Oxford City Council

Introduction and background

1. Group Leaders have asked officers to bring forward proposals for how Council could recognise the eminent services of a small number of members who are standing down in May 2018.

Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen

2. Council has the power under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer the title of "Honorary Alderman" or "Honorary Alderwoman" 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”.

3. The titles Honorary Alderman and Honorary Alderwoman are specifically reserved for former members of Council who have rendered eminent services to the Council.
4. A proposed Council scheme for the enrolment of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen is attached as Appendix 1. Council is recommended to adopt this scheme.

Qualification criteria

5. It is important to note that honorary titles are not intended as a means of recognising long service and should only be used where there are exceptional cases that merit an honorary award. This is reflected in the proposed scheme, which seeks to set the expectation that honorary awards are exceptional, without fettering Council’s discretion to make such awards.
6. In practice, where exceptional circumstances do apply, it is likely to be in cases where members have served for a considerable period of time. The proposed scheme defines this period as not less than 12 years in total (equivalent to three full terms) but allows for flexibility to be applied in particular cases where members have served for less than 12 years and it is considered by Council that they have rendered eminent services.
7. The proposed scheme also requires that members should have either held high political office within the Council or acted as Lord Mayor with distinction, or have an exceptional record of community service and leadership (which could apply in cases where members have not held high political office or acted as Lord Mayor).

Nomination and enrolment

8. The legal powers and process for formally awarding the titles Honorary Alderman and Honorary Alderwoman are similar to those for awarding Freedom of the City.
9. The proposed scheme allows for any serving member to nominate an individual who is a former member of Oxford City Council for an honorary award, with the support of their Group Leader or the Leader of the Council. The process for nomination and enrolment is set out in the proposed scheme.
10. Honorary titles can only legally be conferred where two thirds of voting members present at a special meeting vote in favour of a proposal to make an award. The Monitoring Officer will therefore need to be satisfied that any nominations would receive a high degree of support across the Council Chamber.

Privileges

11. The proposed scheme sets out the privileges that Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen would be entitled to.

Withdrawal of the title and its privileges

12. The proposed scheme makes provisions for the withdrawal of honorary titles in cases where recipients are re-elected as members of the Council and in other exceptional cases, which would be considered at the time on the individual circumstances, where there is a proposal to remove the award.

Legal issues

13. The Legal issues including the power to confer the title of Honorary Alderman and Honorary Alderwoman under S249 of the Local Government Act 1972 are contained within the report.

Financial Issues

14. It is expected that any costs associated with the enrolment of Aldermen and Alderwomen would be met from the existing civic budget.

Alternative option

15. Council could chose not to agree the proposed scheme, in which case an alternative scheme should be agreed before Council proceeds with conferring any honorary titles on former members.

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Background Papers: None	

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