

REPORT FOR: **COUNCIL**

Date of Meeting: 27 February 2014

Subject: Honorary Alderman

Responsible Officer: Hugh Peart – Director of Legal and Governance Services

Exempt: No

Enclosures: None

Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out proposals to mark in an appropriate manner the long service to the Authority of Richard Romain (32 years from election in May 1982).

Recommendations:

To agree that a Special Council meeting be convened on 12 June 2014 to consider conferring the honour of Honour Alderman on Councillor Richard Romain upon his retirement from the Council as at 22 May 2014.

A subsequent presentation ceremony appropriately could be held to precede the Council Meeting in July 2014.

Introduction

This report sets out the options open to the Council for a means of recognising the services given to the Council by Councillor Richard Romain who will have achieved 32 years' continuous service as a Councillor in May 2014.

1. Statutory Background

Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides as follows:

“A principal Council may, by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object confer the title of honorary aldermen on persons who have in the opinion of the Council rendered eminent services to the Council as past members of the Council but who are not then Councillors of the Council”.

2. Harrow Context

2.1 The Council has previously conferred the title of Honorary Aldermen in July 1986, on former Conservative Councillors Frank Rees and Nan Rees. Frank Rees had served a total of 26 years as a Councillor and 3 years as an Alderman (prior to that office being abolished); Nan Rees had served for 22 years consecutively as a Councillor. Each had served as both Deputy Mayor and Mayor. Both have since died.

2.2 In May 2006 the Council conferred the title of Honorary Alderman on former Labour Councillor Keith Toms in recognition of eminent and distinguished services rendered to the Borough over a continuous period of 32 years as a Councillor. Alderman Toms also served as Deputy Mayor and Mayor of the Borough.

2.3 Whilst it is the Council's decision as to what would constitute “eminent services to the Council” it cannot be fettered by any advance standard, and members might consider it appropriate to establish indicative, minimum criteria for the future consideration of awarding, the honour.

For example, total service as a Councillor of 25 years or more as the benchmark: and possibly that this included a year as Mayor. Additionally, that the former Member was held in esteem by the whole Council and they had not courted controversy in their terms of office, or brought the Council into disrepute by any of their actions.

3. Process:

3.1 It should be noted that were the honour of Honorary Alderman to be conferred on Councillor Romain this would be with effect from the date of his

retirement as a Councillor. It is understood that Councillor Romain intends to retire in May 2014.

3.2 If the Authority wished to proceed with the conferment of the title of Honorary Alderman a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present at a specially convened meeting of the Council would be required. On the previous occasions that the Council conferred honorary titles the special meeting was held immediately before an ordinary meeting of the Council.

4. Status of an Honorary Alderman

4.1 On the previous occasions the following privileges were accorded to the honour:

- to enjoy the courtesy title of Honorary Alderman and to be so addressed;
- to attend as a spectator at meetings of the Council and to have a seat reserved for this purpose;
- to receive a copy of the Council Summons;
- to receive invitations to all civic and social events to which Members of the Council are being invited;
- to walk in civic processions in a position immediately senior to serving Members.

4.2 The honour is held for the life of the recipient.

4.3 The Honorary Aldermen were provided with Illuminated Scrolls recording the Council's Resolution to confer the honour and they were provided with distinctive Robes and Badges for civic occasions.

4.4 There is one Robe still held by the Council. Additional costs would be incurred for the Illuminated Scroll and Badge the preparation of which could take 8 to 10 weeks.

5. Further Information

This matter has appropriately been the subject of consultation with Group Leaders and the individual Councillor concerned. If Council consider that it wishes to bestow the honour of Honorary Alderman and to call a Special Meeting, this meeting could precede the Council Meeting on Thursday 12 June 2014 and a subsequent presentation ceremony could be held to precede the Council Meeting 24 July 2014.

6. Financial Implications

There is no specific provision for any expenditure arising from this matter and budget provision will have to be sourced from within current resources.

7. Legal implications

The Council Procedure Rules, rule 18 and the Committee Procedure Rules, rule 19 state that voting will be decided by simple majority unless the constitution or statute provides otherwise. The general statutory provision is Para 39(1) of Sched. 12 the LGA 1972 which refers to all decisions being made by the majority of members present and voting. This is subject to any statutory provision to the contrary including any such provision in the 1972 Act. Section 249(1) allows for a two thirds majority in the case of conferring the title of honorary aldermen.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Name: Dawn Calvery | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer |
| Date: 21 February 2013 | | |
| Name: Jessica Farmer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Monitoring Officer |
| Date: 21 February 2013 | | |

Contact Details

Contact: Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Elaine McEachron, Democratic & Electoral Services Manager.
Tel: 020 8424 1097 E-mail: elaine.mceachron@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None