

Meeting:	COUNCIL
Date:	27 APRIL 2006
Subject:	HONORARY ALDERMEN
Responsible Officer:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Contact Officer:	J Portillo, Senior Professional Corporate Governance
Portfolio Holder:	The Leader of the Council
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part I

## **Section 1: Summary**

### **Decision Required**

To agree that a Special Council Meeting be convened to consider bestowing the honour of Honorary Alderman on Councillor Keith Toms upon his retirement from the Council as at 8 May 2006.

### **Reason for report**

The intention to mark in an appropriate manner the long service to the Authority of Keith Toms (32 years from election in May 1974) who has served as Deputy Mayor and Mayor of the Borough.

### **Benefits**

Celebrates achievement and dedicated public service, providing an example of merit and reward in the civic life of the Borough.

## **Cost of Proposals**

Depends on the options which might be followed but is estimated at under £1,000 direct expenditure (related to the commissioning of a framed, Illuminated Scroll) other than the associated democratic costs (e.g. convening a Special Council, printing and paper costs, etc.) which would be contained within existing budgets. (Please refer to financial comments) .

## **Risks**

None that are identifiable

## **Implications if recommendations rejected**

No direct implications for the Authority.

## **Section 2: Report**

### **Introduction and Statutory Provisions**

2.1 I have been asked to report on the options open to the Council for a means of recognising the services given to the Council by Councillor Keith Toms, who will have achieved 32 years' continuous service as a Councillor in May 2006. Councillor Toms was Deputy Mayor in 1996/97 and elected Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 1997/98.

2.2 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 that Council but who are not then Councillors of the Council.”

Section 249(6) states:

“The Council of a London Borough or a district which has the status of a city borough or royal borough may spend such reasonable sum as they think fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person upon whom they have conferred the title of honorary alderman or admitted to be an honorary freeman of the city borough or royal borough.”

### **Precedent**

2.3 The Council has previously conferred the title of Honorary Alderman on one occasion, in July 1986, on former Conservative Group Councillors Frank Rees and Nan Rees. Each had served as Deputy Mayor and Mayor. Frank Rees had served a total of 26 years as a member (as well as 3 years as an Alderman, prior to that formal office being abolished). Nan Rees had served for 22 consecutive years as a Councillor. Both Mr and Mrs Rees have subsequently died and accordingly the honour of Honorary Alderman has currently lapsed in Harrow.

## **Process**

- 2.4 It will be noted that were the honour of Honorary Aldermen to be conferred on Councillor Toms this would be with effect from the date of his retirement as a Councillor. It is understood that Councillor Toms intends to retire in May 2006.
- 2.5 If the Authority wish to proceed on this matter a special meeting of the Council would be required. On the previous occasion that the Council conferred honorary titles the special meeting was held immediately before an ordinary meeting of the Council.
- 2.6 The preparation of a framed illuminated address and/or the obtaining of a casket could well take of the order of six to eight weeks.

## **Status of an Honorary Alderman**

- 2.7 The following are examples of privileges that could go with the rank of Honorary Alderman:
- (i) To enjoy the courtesy title of Alderman and to be so addressed.
  - (ii) To attend as a guest meetings of the Council and to have a seat reserved for this purpose.
  - (iii) To receive a copy of the Council Summons.
  - (iv) To receive invitations to all civic and social events to which Members of the Council are being invited.
  - (v) To walk in civic processions in a position immediately senior to serving Members.

## **Decisions**

- 2.8 Council is invited to consider the following:
- (i) Whether it is wished to bestow the honour of Honorary Alderman.
  - (ii) Further to (i), calling a Special Council Meeting.

[A draft provision has been indicated in the Calendar of Meetings 2006/07 for a Special Council Meeting to be held on Wednesday 31 May 2006, to precede the Extraordinary Council Meeting on that evening. A subsequent presentation ceremony appropriately could be held to precede the Council Meeting on 13 July 2006.]

## 2.9 **Consultation**

This matter has appropriately been the subject of consultation with Group Leaders and the individual Councillor concerned.

## 2.10 **Financial Implications**

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy advises that there is no specific provision in the revenue estimates for any expenditure arising from this matter, and thus a supplementary estimate would be required if the costs cannot be contained

within the Civic Expenses budget provision. Council may consider it appropriate that any supplementary estimate be financed from the Contingency Provision.

2.11 Legal Implications

Included in the report.

2.12 Equalities Impact

Not applicable to this report, concerning the proposed recognition of an individual Member's service.

2.13 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

Not applicable.

**Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents**

Background Documents: None.