

# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL ANNUAL COUNCIL

18 May 2023

Report by the Civic Working Group

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Report Title	WNC Honorary Aldermen
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## Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

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### List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Honorary Alderman Scheme

Appendix 2: Civic Working Group Terms of Reference

## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 To propose that former Councillors who have served for 12 years or more as Councillors in the area of West Northamptonshire be eligible to be considered for conferment of the title of “Honorary Alderman”. For the purposes of continuity, this would apply to Councillors who served at the former Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council, South Northamptonshire Council, and the part of Northamptonshire County Council which covered the West Northamptonshire area.

## 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 West Northamptonshire Council plays a significant role in the strategic delivery of public services across the county. Its role and impact mean that it potentially touches the lives of every West Northamptonshire

resident, commuter, and business. The council wishes to create an opportunity for individuals to be recognised for their contribution to public service.

- 2.2 It is therefore proposed that a scheme of Honorary Aldermen be introduced, to recognise individuals demonstrating acts of eminent public service.
- 2.3 An Honorary Alderman may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide.
- 2.4 It is proposed that the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred on former Councillors who have met the criteria of having a minimum of 12 years' service as a Councillor at one of the authorities referred to in paragraph 1.1, and the suggested scheme is in line with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that:
  - a) The Council agrees to the scheme for the enrolment of Honorary Aldermen of West Northamptonshire Council as set out in Appendix A.

### **4. Reason for Recommendations**

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- 4.1 The recommendation proposed will enable West Northamptonshire Council to recognise and celebrate the acts of eminent services of past Councillors.

### **5. Report Background**

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- 5.1 The WNC Civic Working Group have requested that a decision be taken to introduce an Honorary Aldermen Scheme, similar to the schemes which were previously in place at the former Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council.

### **6. Issues and Choices**

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- 6.1 Under section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the position of Honorary Alderman is open to any person who has, in the opinion of the Council, given eminent service to the Council as a Councillor. The Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 updated the 1972 Act to enable the title to be conferred on women.
- 6.2 It is for each authority to define 'eminent service'. It is proposed that in the case of West Northamptonshire Council the definition should be:

**A minimum of 12 years' past service as a Councillor at West Northamptonshire Council, the former Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council, South Northamptonshire Council, or the part of Northamptonshire County Council which covered the West Northamptonshire area.**

**And meeting at least one of the following conditions:**

- **Holding senior political office with distinction**
- **Having an exceptional record of community service and leadership**

- 6.3 Nominations as an Honorary Alderman would be made by a Member of the Council and submitted in writing to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with the Civic Working Group, chaired by the Chairman of the Council, would submit those names nominated that meet the

necessary criteria and who would be willing to accept the honour, to a specially convened meeting of Council. This meeting would then vote on the nominations and would require a two-thirds majority of those voting to be approved.

- 6.4 The positions of Honorary Alderman and West Northamptonshire Councillor are mutually exclusive. In the event of an Alderman being elected as a West Northamptonshire Councillor, membership as an Honorary Alderman will cease.
- 6.5 The honour is purely ceremonial. Honorary Aldermen may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may decide, but do not have the right to receive allowances or other payments.
- 6.6 It is proposed that Honorary Aldermen receive a badge, which may be worn as outlined in the scheme.
- 6.7 Honorary Aldermen will be subject to the same codes of conduct and standards requirements as a West Northamptonshire Councillor and would face the sanction of loss of title and role should they be found in breach of the codes and standards set out in the Council's Constitution.
- 6.8 Removal of the title of Honorary Alderman will follow the same process as appointment.
- 6.9 With regards to alternative options considered, there is no obligation to create an Honorary Aldermen scheme.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

- 7.1.1 The financial implications related to the scheme will be funded from existing Civic Budgets held within Executive Support.
- 7.1.2 It is anticipated that the costs of the scheme will be below £5,000.
- 7.1.3 The 1972 Act specifically rules out any payment to Honorary Aldermen, including travel and subsistence allowances.

### **7.2 Legal**

- 7.2.1 Section 249 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 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 members of that council”.

- 7.2.2 Section 32 of the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No2) Regulations 2008 confirm that a person who has been admitted as an Honorary Alderman of a local government area that has been abolished shall be treated as being admitted as an Honorary Alderman of the new reorganised area.

### **7.3 Risk**

There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

#### 7.4 **Consultation and communication**

7.5 Consultation on the development of the detail of the scheme will take place with political group leaders following the agreement in principle to establish the scheme. Communications activity will be undertaken to promote the Honorary Alderman scheme and its role in encouraging civic pride by recognising individuals demonstrating acts of eminent public service.

#### 7.6 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.6.1 The decision to establish a scheme for the creation of Honorary Aldermen is a matter for the Full Council and is not, therefore, subject to oversight by the Overview and Scrutiny function.

#### 7.7 **Climate Impact**

7.7.1 There are no climate or environmental impacts arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

#### 7.8 **Community Impact**

7.8.1 There is no distinct community impact arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

### 8. **Background Papers**

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8.1 None