

Report to: **Annual Council**  
Date: **25 May 2023**  
Title: **Honorary Aldermen – Process**  
Portfolio Area: Leader  
Wards Affected: **N/A**  
Urgent Decision: **Y / N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y / N**

Date next steps can be taken: Immediately following this meeting

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**Recommendations:**

**That Council be RECOMMENDED:**

- 1. to review and approve the criteria for appointing Honorary Aldermen of the Council (paragraph 3.1 below refers); and**
- 2. that, subject to approval of the criteria, Group Leaders be invited to make nominations to appoint Honorary Aldermen of the Council, prior to the arrangement of a Special Council meeting specifically convened for this purpose.**

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks Council approval for the criteria and procedure to appoint Honorary Aldermen.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, “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 the Council.”

- 2.2 There is no statutory guidance or definition of "eminent services", although it is recommended that each Council should have its own criteria for an appointment.
- 2.3 The Council criteria and procedure was last reviewed (and adopted) on 7 February 2008 and it is now considered timely to conduct a review.

### **3. Outcomes/outputs**

#### **3.1 Proposed Criteria**

Council may wish to consider adopting the following criteria:

- (a) *the title may be conferred on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered "eminent services" to the Council as past Members, but who are no longer serving Members. (NB. whilst not a definitive list, "eminent service" will ordinarily include having been: the Leader of the Council and/or a Group Leader for at least one Council Term; and the Chairman of the Council and/or the Chairman of one of its principal Committees for an extended period of time);*
- (b) *there shall be no specific definition of 'eminent services', it being left to the discretion of the Council at the time to assess and recognise any individual's contribution to the activities of the Council and the wellbeing of the district of the South Hams;*
- (c) *nominees would normally require a minimum period of more than two full Council terms of service as a Member of the District Council; and*
- (d) *in the event of an Honorary Alderman being re-elected as a District Councillor, then they will cease to hold the office of Alderman.*

#### **3.2 Procedure**

3.2.1 In accordance with section 249 of the 1972 Act, nominees would have to receive the support of not less than two-thirds of the Members voting thereon at a Special Council meeting convened for the purpose. It is suggested that nominations can be made by any Group Leader. However, before proceeding, officers and Members would, via the party groups, establish whether or not the nomination would be likely to receive sufficient support to proceed.

#### **3.3 Rights of Honorary Aldermen**

3.3.1 Whilst having no “legal or social precedence” in the community, it is custom and practice for Honorary Aldermen to be invited to Civic ceremonial events. This would be the Annual Council meeting, the Chairman’s Civic Reception, and other events such as any future appointment of Honorary Aldermen.

3.3.2 The status of Honorary Alderman carries no special right to attend or address meetings of the Council or its Committees or to receive any allowances or payments to which serving Members are entitled. However, at the discretion of the Chairman, a nominee for Honorary Alderman may (if present) be invited to respond to the vote conferring that status.

### 3.4 **Honorary Aldermen**

3.4.1 The Council has previously conferred the Honorary Aldermen title on Messrs Richard Yonge and David Thorning (both in 2008) and Mr John Tucker (in 2019).

## 4. **Options available and consideration of risk**

4.1 Members are asked if they wish to recommend to Council that the criteria for appointing Honorary Aldermen of the Council be approved. Subject to approval of the criteria, nominations will be sought and agreed with Group Leaders prior to the arrangement of a Special Council meeting.

## 5. **Implications**

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		The Local Government Act 1972: Section 249 sets out the provisions around conferring the title of ‘Honorary Aldermen’.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		There are no financial implications directly related to this report.
Risk		There would be a reputational risk to the Council of arranging a Special Council meeting to confer the title without the requisite two-thirds Member support already being assured for the proposal.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Council Theme – <i>Efficient and Effective Council</i>

Consultation & Engagement Strategy		Group Leaders will be fully consulted and engaged prior to any nominations being made.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		N/A
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		N/A
Safeguarding		N/A
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		N/A
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		N/A
Other implications		N/A

**Supporting Information**

**Appendices:**

None

**Background Papers:**

Report to Council Meeting – 7 February 2008.