

Wolverhampton City Council

Committee / Panel **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Date **16 JUNE 2011**

Originating Service Group(s) **DELIVERY (GOVERNANCE SERVICES)**

Contact Officer(s) **LINDA BANBURY**

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Title/Subject Matter **HONORARY ALDERMAN – CONFERMENT OF TITLE**

1.0 Recommendation

- 1.1 That an extraordinary meeting of the Council be convened on 13 July 2011 to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Surjan Singh Duhra.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In July 1998 the Council agreed to establish a policy for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen, for which there is provision in the Local Government Act 1972 (Section 249). Subsequently, in September 1998, the then Policy and Resources Committee endorsed a procedure for reporting to Council on this matter and determined the eligibility criteria. Former Councillors Mrs Hodson and Howells were conferred with the title in January 1999, Councillor Mrs D Seiboth received the honour in October 2000, Councillors N.G. Davies and Carpenter in September 2002, Councillor A Hart in December 2007, Councillor R Hart in December 2008, and Councillor T Bowen in November 2009.
- 2.2 Councillor Duhra ceased to be a Member of the Council in May 2011 after 33 years' distinguished service. During this time he served on many Council bodies spanning the whole spectrum of local authority services. He was Chair of the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee from 1988 to 1990 having been Vice-Chair from 1984 to 1987; he Chaired the Race Relations Sub-Committee from 1987 to 1990 having been Vice-Chair from 1986 to 1987 and chaired the Special Advisory Group from 2009 to 2010. He was also Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee from 1980 to 1981 and 2006 to 2008 and Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee (formerly Municipal Trading Committee and Licensing and Environmental Protection Panel) for a total of three years. Notably, Mr Duhra was Mayor of Wolverhampton in 1991/92 and again in 2009/10.
- 2.3 Mr Duhra's service meets the criterion for eligibility for conferment agreed by the Council, i.e. a minimum of twenty years service on Wolverhampton Council by a retiring Member of the Council, including service to former Councils within its area, with broken service being aggregated for the purpose. The service criterion was reduced from 24 years to 20 years by resolution of full Council on 14 July 2010. Following consultation with the political groups on the Council, it is proposed that the title of Honorary Alderman is bestowed on Mr Duhra.
- 2.4 Under the Council's Constitution, the function of advising the Council on the conferment of the title of Honorary Alderman rests with the Standards Committee, and the Committee is therefore asked to consider this proposal.

3.0 Role of Honorary Aldermen

- 3.1 Honorary Aldermen are invited to attend full Council meetings in a non-participating capacity and are also invited to various functions such as Civic and Remembrance Sundays and other appropriate civic events. Honorary Aldermen are also afforded access to the Members' rooms and Members' car park. The names of Honorary Aldermen are inscribed on a roll of honour board on the ground floor of the Civic Centre.

4.0 Procedure for Conferment

- 4.1 The Local Government Act 1972 Act provides that an extraordinary Council meeting be convened for the purpose of conferring the title and the necessary resolution must be passed by not less than two thirds of the Members voting. It is proposed that the extraordinary meeting be convened immediately prior to the ordinary Council meeting on 13 July 2011. The presentation of a badge of office will be made at a later date.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 As was the case with previous Honorary Aldermen, it would be the intention to present Mr Duhra with a badge of office, the total cost of which is approximately £850. This, together with the small cost of inscribing his name on the roll of honour board, can be met from the £10k Member Equipment budget. [GE/08062011/B]

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 There is provision in the Local Government Act 1972 (Section 249) for a Local Authority to confer the title of Honorary Alderman 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". Service to former Councils within the existing Council area may count for this purpose. [FD/090811/P]

7.0 Equal Implications

- 7.1 It should be noted that the Local Government Act 1972 provides no scope for departing from the term "Alderman".

8.0 Environmental Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.