

Governance and Ethics Committee

3 September 2021

Report title	Conferring the Title of Honorary Alderman	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Ian Brookfield Leader of the Council	
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Originating service	Governance	
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Report to be considered by	Council	15 September 2021

Recommendation for decision:

The Governance and Ethics Committee recommends that Council:

1. Convene an extraordinary meeting on the 15 September to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Roger Lawrence.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider whether to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Roger Lawrence who ceased to be a Member of the Council in May 2021.

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. The service criterion was reduced from 24 years to 20 years by resolution of full Council on 14 July 2010.
- 2.2 Mr Lawrence has a total of 38 years' distinguished service. During this time, he has not only served the residents of St Peter's Ward, but also held many important positions within the Council impacting on the lives of the citizens of our whole City. They are too numerous to mention, but in particular he was Leader of the Council (2002 – 2008 and 2010 - 2019), Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Chair of Housing, Planning & Development Committee, Vice Chair of Policy & Resources and Chair of Finance & General Purposes. He had also taken an active part on the other regulatory committees, scrutiny panels and reviews and advisory bodies he served on.
- 2.3 Mr Lawrence was also the driving force, as initial programme board chair, of the fledgling West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), passionately advocating devolution of power and money from Whitehall to the West Midlands. He was also responsible for the regional transport portfolio - a post he had held for 4 years - overseeing much needed investment across the West Midland's tram, train and major road network.
- 2.4 Mr Lawrence's service meets the criterion for eligibility for conferment agreed by the Council. Following consultation with the political groups on the Council it is proposed that the title of Honorary Alderman is bestowed on him.
- 2.5 Under the provisions of the Council's Constitution, the function of advising full Council on the conferment of the title of Honorary Alderman rests with the Governance and Ethics Committee, and therefore, the Committee is asked to consider this proposal.
- 2.6 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 Sunday and other appropriate civic events. Honorary Aldermen are also afforded access to Councillors' rooms and Councillors' car park. The names of Honorary Aldermen are inscribed on a roll of honour board on the ground floor of the Civic Centre.
- 2.7 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 prior to the ordinary Council meeting on 15 September 2021.

3.0 Financial implications

- 3.1 As was the case with previous Honorary Aldermen it is the intention to present the former Councillor with a badge of office. These will be drawn from an existing stock of badges purchased prior to this financial year. A small cost will be incurred in inscribing the name of the Honorary Alderman on the badge, and also on the roll of honour board, but this can easily be accommodated within existing Democratic Services budgets. [GE/24082021/F]

4.0 Legal implications

- 4.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables 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 the Council but who are not then Councillors of the Council". [DP/3082021/B]

5.0 Equalities implications

- 5.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

6.0 Any Other Implications

- 6.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

7.0 Background papers

- 7.1 None