

HONORARY ALDERMAN

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| Head of Service/Contact: | Amardip Healy, Chief Legal Officer |
| Urgent Decision?(yes/no) | No |
| If yes, reason urgent decision required: | |
| Annexes/Appendices (attached): | None |
| Other available papers (not attached): | Report to Strategy & Resources Committee, 26 November 2019 |

Report summary

The report invites the Committee to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Jean Steer in recognition of her eminent services to the Borough.

Recommendation (s)

The Council agrees to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Jean Steer Council in recognition of her eminent service to the Borough.

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

1.1 Not applicable.

2 Background

2.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows Local Authorities to appoint both Honorary Freemen and Honorary Aldermen. The criterion for appointment as Freemen is that an individual should be a "person of distinction" and have "rendered eminent service to the place or area". The criterion for appointment as an Alderman is that an individual "should have rendered eminent service to the Council as [a] past Member of that Council". There is no bar on an individual being both an Honorary Freeman and an Honorary Alderman.

2.2 The Local Government Act specifies that both Honorary Freemen and Honorary Aldermen must be appointed at a Special Meeting of Council, with the appointment being endorsed by a two thirds majority of those Members in attendance at the meeting.

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- 2.3 Honorary Aldermen have no 'legal or social precedence' but it is custom and practice that they are invited to all Civic ceremonial events. The Aldermen have no right to attend meetings of the Council or its committees beyond those of the public, but the Council has recognised their attendance and allowing them to sit within the Chamber. The Aldermen status does not carry with it any allowances or payments to which serving councillors are entitled.
- 2.4 It is customary for the Council in the first year of a new municipal term to consider the possibility of the award of honours to Councillors who have given long and distinguished service and who have usually held the office of Mayor of the Borough.
- 2.5 A nomination for former Councillor Jean Steer was received by the Council's Chief Executive. Civic and ceremonial matters fall with the terms of reference of the Strategy and Resources Committee, who, at its meeting on the 26 November 2019, placed on record its deep appreciation of the eminent services to the Council rendered by former Councillor Jean Steer and also requested a Special Meeting of the Council be convened, at which members could approve a recommendation to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Jean Steer.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The criterion for appointment as an Alderman is that an individual "should have rendered eminent service to the Council as [a] past Member of that Council".
- 3.2 Former Councillor Jean Steer served as an Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillor for 24 years, from May 1995 to May 2019. During that period Jean Steer was a Member of a number of the Council's Committee's Sub-Committees and Advisory Panels, and served as the Chairman of the Social (5 years) and Leisure (4 years) Committees.
- 3.3 The Council also appointed former Councillor Jean Steer to represent the Authority on a number of external organisations, notably Age Concern (Epsom and Ewell) (18 years), Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators (7 years), Epsom and Walton Downs Training Grounds Management Board (14 years). Jean Steer was Mayor of the Borough 2007-2008, and Deputy Mayor 2008-2009.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 There are costs of preparing the traditional scrolls and a photographer for the ceremony. It is also customary for the Council to cover the cost of any hospitality provided for the newly elected Alderman and a select number of guests. The total costs are estimated at £4,000.

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4.2 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** The £4,000 costs associated with the election of a new Alderman can be funded from within the existing 2019/20 civic expenses budget.

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

5.1 The formal decision to confer the status of Honorary Alderman must be ratified by a Special Meeting of the Council.

5.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** *none arising from the contents of this report.*

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7 Partnerships

7.1 Not applicable.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 To consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Jean Steer in recognition of her eminent services to the Borough.

Ward(s) Affected: (All Wards);