

**CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE - 30<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2005**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**HONORARY ALDERMEN**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to enable the Committee to discuss possible arrangements for the appointment by the County Council of Honorary Aldermen.

**Background**

2. Under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the County Council may “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”.
3. Such a decision must be made by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting thereon at a special meeting of the Council. Thus, the title can only be conferred upon past members of the Council who are not councillors at the date of that meeting.
4. An Honorary Alderman is entitled to attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide.
5. The County Council, unlike City and Borough Councils, has no specific statutory power to incur expenditure in relation to the appointment of Honorary Aldermen which means that restraint will need to be exercised in relation to any expenditure which might be incurred in respect of any such appointments.
6. The possible appointment of Honorary Aldermen has been the subject of discussion at Group Leader level. All Leaders have agreed to support the proposal and have endorsed the following guidelines:-
  - (a) In practical terms it is likely that there will be a very limited number of nominations from the political groups as it will usually be appropriate to consider these every four years, following the County Council elections;
  - (b) Discussions should take place at Group Leader level following elections with a view to an extraordinary meeting of the Council being held immediately prior to the first ordinary meeting of the Council in that year;

- (c) The conferring of the title of Honorary Alderman should be on a strictly limited basis to recognise the exceptional service of people who have reached the end of their political careers. The understanding will be that former members of the Council will not be nominated if it is likely that they will wish either to remain politically active or become involved with campaigning in public (in a broad sense) in some other way. Certainly, it would not be appropriate if this could bring them in any way into conflict with the Authority.
7. All three Group Leaders have expressed a wish to nominate individuals who meet these requirements to serve as Honorary Aldermen.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

8. The arrangements can only apply to past members of the Council.

### **Recommendations**

9. The Committee is recommended:-
- (a) to put forward a recommendation to the County Council on the principle of the Council appointing Honorary Aldermen;
  - (b) to ask the Council to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on certain individuals;
  - (c) to request the Chairman of the County Council to agree to the holding of an extraordinary meeting of the County Council for the purpose of appointing Honorary Aldermen immediately prior to the next ordinary meeting of the County Council on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2005;
  - (d) to authorise the Chief Executive to take all necessary action relating to any proposed appointments including the form of any address to a person upon whom the title is to be conferred.

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Circulation under Sensitive Issues Procedure**

None.

### **Officer to contact**

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