



CAI.06 12/13
Challenge and Improvement Committee
26 June 2012

Subject: HONORARY ROLES AND TITLES (ALDERMEN / FREEMEN / FREEDOM OF THE DISTRICT) – CRITERIA, PROCESS, ROLES AND LIMITATIONS

Report by:	Rachel North, Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer:	Nicola Turnbull Governance and Civic Officer 01427 676606 nicola.turnbull@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	Further to the discussions that took place at the Annual Meeting of Council and the last meeting of Challenge and Improvement Committee, the amended role, limitations, criteria and process for the titles of Honorary Alderman, Honorary Freeman, and Freedom of Entry have been reviewed for agreement by C and I Committee and seek recommendation to Council for ratification.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1) That Members agree amendments to the suggested role, limitations, criteria and process for conferring the title of Honorary Alderman, Freedom of Entry and Honorary Freeman of West Lindsey District Council for submission to Council for ratification.**
- 2) That Members recommend the proposals for an 'Honours Panel' and its composition to Council for ratification.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: This decision is made under the legal framework of the 1972 Local Government Act, Section 249, and 2009 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act as detailed in this report. In addition the 1980 Local Government Planning and Land Act also applies.

Financial :There are no financial implications for the agreement of a role, limitations, process and criteria for the purpose of conferring the title of Honorary Alderman / Freeman / Freedom of Entry.

Staffing : None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : None

Risk Assessment :

There is a risk that a nomination may be received for an honorary title and no process has been put in place. Without an agreed process, nominations may be dealt with inconsistently and the decisions made can be open to challenge.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Civic Ceremonial (Fifth Edition), by Paul Millward – copy kept at West Lindsey DC Offices

1972 Local Government Act – available on the internet

2009 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act – available on the internet

1980 Local Government Planning and Land Act – available on the internet

Committee and Council reports by various local authorities on this subject matter as reference material.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes

No

Key Decision:

Yes

No

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A report on West Lindsey Honours was submitted to Annual Council on 14th May 2012 for consideration. Following debate the matter was referred to Challenge and Improvement Committee for further consideration to scrutinise the report and submit it back to a future meeting of Council.
- 1.2 At the last meeting of Challenge and Improvement Committee a summary of the discussions at Annual Council was received, alongside officer advice, which was discussed and members views were captured by officers.
- 1.3 Challenge and Improvement Committee wished to finalise the report prior to submission to Council for final ratification.
- 1.4 This report set out an amended role, limitations, criteria and process for conferring the titles of:
 - a) Honorary Alderman of the District of West Lindsey;
 - b) Honorary Freeman of the District of West Lindsey; and
 - c) Freedom of Entry to the District of West Lindsey.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2009, the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act was passed, amending the Local Government Act 1972 to allow District Councils to appoint Honorary Aldermen, Honorary Freemen and Freedom of Entry. The below notes refer:
 - 2.1.1 Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 states "that 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 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 members of the Council."
 - 2.1.2 Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 gives Councils the power to bestow the honour of Honorary Freeman and to grant "freedom of entry to the District" to persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area.
- 2.2 The Council currently has no appointed Honorary Aldermen or Honorary Freemen, and have not awarded Freedom of Entry to any

collective of people, but are able to undertake such an appointment as set out above.

- 2.3 As the Council are now able to make these appointments, (whether they choose to or not) nominations may be received in light of this power. If the Council do not agree a role, limitations, criteria and process for these positions there is a risk that nominations may be dealt with inconsistently and therefore be open to public challenge.
- 2.4 There is no statutory guidance or definition of “eminent services” and therefore West Lindsey District Council will have to set their own criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen, Honorary Freeman and Freedom of Entry. A suggested role, limitations, criteria and process has been drawn up and are set out in this report for agreement.
- 2.5 A ‘fair group’ of members and officers need to be appointed as an ‘Honours Panel’. The details for this panel are set out in this report for recommendation to Council.

3. HONORARY ALDERMEN

3.1 Role

- a) To enjoy the Courtesy Title of Honorary Alderman and be so addressed and to receive a badge of office, and also to have their name entered on to the Roll of Honour outside the Council Chamber.
- b) Invited to attend Civic Functions hosted by the Council and be invited to take part in civic processions.
- c) Invited to attend meetings of Annual Council may attend Council meetings as a non-participating guest and will have a seat reserved for them in the Chamber.
- d) Welcome to receive the Council Year Book on request.
- e) If the Honorary Alderman has held the office of Chairman or Vice Chairman during their service to West Lindsey District Council, they may be called upon to assist the Council through representation at a Civic Function in the absence of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council.
- f) To wear their Aldermanic Badge at any function or meeting that they are attending in their capacity as Alderman.
- g) May wish to assist the Chairman in Charity Fund Raising for the Chairman's chosen Charity / Charities.
- h) Be an ambassador for the Council and promote Civic Pride.

- i) On death, to be accorded the same honours as a former Chairman or serving member of Council, with the Civic Flag flying at half mast and representation from the Civic Office at the funeral (if requested).
- j) To be given access to the Members Room at West Lindsey District Council Offices.
- k) To receive, on request to the Returning Officer, an invitation to the election count.
- l) To enjoy such privileges as West Lindsey District Council may from time to time confer upon Honorary Aldermen.
- m) The honour bestowed on an Honorary Alderman is life long, unless the Council wish to make steps to relinquish the honour.

3.2 Limitations

- a) No payments will be made to an Alderman for any service or expenditure that they undertake whilst in office.
- b) Honorary Aldermen May not take part in Council meetings.
- c) Honorary Aldermen may be reappointed by election of the public to serve on West Lindsey District Council, but their Aldermanic Office is suspended for the period of their appointment.
- d) A maximum of four Honorary Aldermen can be appointed during the 2012/13 civic year, following this, a maximum of one award a year can be bestowed. This is a limitation only, and not a requirement. Awards should only be made when appropriate.
- e) The Honorary title may be removed by way of Council resolution in light of circumstances such as imprisonable criminal conviction, or bringing the Council in to severe disrepute.

3.3 Criteria

- a) Must be a Former Councillor of West Lindsey District Council.
- b) Must have concluded their service to the Council within the past 4 years.
- c) Candidates should have rendered eminent services by way of exceptional contribution to the district and it's Council in terms of length of service and in particular achievement whilst in office.
- d) Must be considered suitable for fulfilling the role of an Alderman, and respected by their peers and communities.

- e) Achievement should be exemplary and ideally link to one of the themes within the Corporate Plan.

3.4 Process

- a) A nominee must be nominated in writing (including fax and electronic submissions) to the Civic Officer by a current serving Member of Council and seconded by a further serving Member of Council.
- b) A nomination will be measured against the agreed criteria and considered by the Honours Panel prior to submission to an extraordinary meeting of Council for a final decision.
- c) Following measurement against criteria, nominations will be circulated to all Members of Council on a confidential basis. Councillors will be given the opportunity to state any objections to the nomination in a confidential manner and reasons for any objection to a nomination must be given.
- d) It will be determined prior to calling a meeting of Council whether a candidate fills a substantial amount of the criteria.
- e) A proposition must be approved by two thirds of the present Members at a meeting of Council called specifically for that sole purpose. This may be immediately prior or following a scheduled meeting of Council.
- f) On the passing of the recommendation it should be announced that at a future meeting of Council an aldermanic badge will be presented to the candidate with a small reception following the meeting hosted by the Chairman in celebration.

4. **HONORARY FREEMEN**

4.1 Role

- a) Any persons declared Honorary Freeman of the District may designate him/herself 'Honorary Freeman of the District of West Lindsey'.
- b) Honorary Freemen will be invited to attend Civic Functions hosted by the Council and be invited to take part in civic processions.
- c) Honorary Freeman will be invited to attend meetings of Annual Council and may attend Council meetings as a non-participating guest and will have a seat reserved for them in the Chamber.
- d) The honour bestowed on an Honorary Freeman is life long, unless the Council wish to make steps to relinquish the honour.

4.2 Limitations

- a) No payments will be made to an Honorary Freeman for any service or expenditure that they undertake.
- b) They may attend Annual Council, but not take part in the proceedings.
- c) A maximum of four Honorary Freemen can be appointed during the 2012/13 civic year, following this, a maximum of one award a year can be bestowed. This is a limitation only and not a requirement. Awards should only be when appropriate.
- d) The Honorary title may be removed by way of Council resolution in light of circumstances such as imprisonable criminal conviction, or bringing the Council in to severe disrepute.

4.3 Criteria

- a) The honour can be bestowed on any person who lives, works or is intrinsically linked with the District of West Lindsey.
- b) Ideally the honour will be bestowed on a person who performs in a voluntary capacity, but this should not preclude the honour being awarded to a person whose dedication and contribution is significantly above that expected from their occupation;
- c) All nominees should have rendered eminent services by way of exceptional contribution to the district and their achievement should be exemplary and ideally link to one of the themes within the Corporate Plan.
- d) Any nominated District / Town / Parish / County Councillor or West Lindsey staff member must have retired from post;

4.4 Process

- a) A nominee must be nominated in writing (including fax and electronic submissions) to the Civic Officer. This nomination can be made by any resident or elector of the district of West Lindsey, but must be in the strictest of confidence without the nominees knowledge;
- b) The nomination must be sponsored by a currently serving West Lindsey District Councillor.
- c) Submission on the nomination should be evidence based by outlining the voluntary service provided by the individual to the community and any other examples of 'community spirit' to justify the honour.

- d) A nomination for an Honorary Freeman will be measured against criteria considered by the Honours Panel prior to submission to an Extraordinary Meeting of Council for a final decision.
- e) Following measurement against criteria, nominations will be circulated to all Members of Council on a confidential basis. Councillors will be given the opportunity to state any objections to the nomination in a confidential manner and reasons for any objection to a nomination must be given.
- f) It will be determined prior to calling a meeting of Council whether a candidate fills a substantial amount of the criteria.
- g) A proposition must be approved by two thirds of the present Members at a meeting of Council called specifically for that sole purpose. This may be immediately prior or following a scheduled meeting of Council.
- h) The resolution should recite the particular grounds upon which the Council have come to their decision, and details of the public services rendered by the recipient should be included.
- i) On the passing of the recommendation it should be announced that at a future meeting of Council a signed oath will be taken by the Honorary Freeman and a Freedom Scroll will be presented to the candidate with a small reception following the meeting hosted by the Chairman in celebration.

5. FREEDOM OF ENTRY TO THE DISTRICT OF WEST LINDSEY

- 5.1 Associated with Honorary Freedoms is the 'Freedom of Entry' which has been granted by a number of Cities / Boroughs / Districts to service units (regiments, ships of the Royal Navy, RAF Stations, etc) which have rendered conspicuous service and which are closely associated with the City / Borough / District.
- 5.2 The so called 'Freedom' – "to march through the streets of the Borough with bayonets fixed, drums beating, and Colours flying" – is really an empty grant as, outside the city of London where the right has been zealously guarded for centuries, it does not seem that any Borough would be entitled to prevent units of Her Majesty's Forces from marching through. However the practice has now been generally accepted and provides a dignified and satisfactory means of enabling a Borough (or in this case a District) to honour a distinguished unit of Her Majesty's Forces.
- 5.3 There is no role set out for Freedom of Entry, as it would be awarded to an organisation, and they would receive the title as a privilege, but have no ceremonial role within the Council.

5.4 A maximum of four Honorary Freedoms can be appointed during the 2012/13 civic year, following this, a maximum of one award a year can be bestowed. This is a limitation only not a requirement. Awards should only be when appropriate.

5.5 Criteria

- a) The honour can be bestowed on any distinguished unit of Her Majesty's Forces who are intrinsically linked/associated with the District of West Lindsey, be this by location or service to the area.
- b) Exceptional contribution to the district and/or country should have been made and should ideally link to one of the themes within the Corporate Plan.
- c) An award is given on the basis of appreciation of the services rendered to the country. Each nomination will be considered on an individual basis.

5.6 Process

- a) A nomination must be nominated in writing (including fax and electronic submissions) to the Civic Officer. This nomination can be made by any resident or elector of the district of West Lindsey, but must be in the strictest of confidence without the nominated group's knowledge;
- b) The nomination must be sponsored by a currently serving West Lindsey District Councillor.
- c) Submission of the nomination should be evidence based by outlining the service provided by the group to the district and country and any other examples to justify the honour.
- d) A nomination for a Freedom of Entry to the District will be considered by the Honours Panel prior to submission to an Extraordinary Meeting of Council for a final decision.
- e) Following consideration, nominations will be circulated to all Members of Council on a confidential basis. Councillors will be given the opportunity to state any objections to the nomination in a confidential manner and reasons for any objection to a nomination must be given.
- f) It will be determined prior to calling a meeting of Council whether the candidate group are deserving of such an award.
- g) A proposition must be approved by two thirds of the present Members at a meeting of Council called specifically for that sole purpose. This may be immediately prior to or following a scheduled meeting of Council.

- h) The resolution should recite the particular grounds upon which the Council have come to their decision, and details of the public services rendered by the recipient should be included.
- i) On the passing of the recommendation it should be announced that at a future meeting of Council a Freedom Scroll will be presented to a representative of the group. A small reception will held on a separate occasion for the group hosted by the Chairman in celebration.

6. HONOURS PANEL

6.1 An Honours Panel will need to be established to be called together on receipt of a nomination for any of the Honorary Roles set out in this report.

6.2 The composition of the Honours Panel is suggested as follows:

- Chairman of the Council (replaced by the Vice-Chairman of the Council when a conflict of interest occurs)
- Chairman of Challenge and Improvement Committee (replaced by the Vice-Chairman on the committee when a conflict of interest occurs)
- An Independent Co-Opted member of the Council (an existing member, chosen by the Chairman upon receipt of a nomination who has no conflict of interest)
- Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer
- Civic Officer

6.3 The role of the Honour Panel is to:

- Consider any nominations received against the criteria and role of the honorary title;
- Offer Members of the Council have an opportunity to object;
- Make recommendations to Council for conferring Honorary Titles; and
- Recommend to Council any revisions to the criteria, role, limitations and process for appointing Honorary Alderman, Freeman and Freedom of Entry to West Lindsey.

7. DECISION

7.1 The report asks Challenge and Improvement Committee to consider the discussions that took place at Annual Council and the last meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee to agree proposals to Council for a role, limitations, criteria and process for the consideration of Honorary Aldermen, Honorary Freeman and Freedom of Entry for West Lindsey District Council.

7.2 In addition it consults for approval the composition of an Honours Panel.