

Full Council

17 January 2017



Report of: Audit Committee

Title: Revised criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women

Ward: Citywide

Member presenting report: Councillor Mead, Chair of Audit Committee

Recommendation

That Full Council considers and approves the revised criteria set out in paragraph 10 governing the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women.

Summary

The Audit Committee has reviewed the criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women. The committee has recommended revised guidance to be applied in respect of future nominations. This requires Full Council approval.



Context and Proposal

1. Under section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may confer the title of Honorary Alderman/woman upon former members of the Council who, in the opinion of the Council have rendered “eminent service” to the Council as a past member of the authority or a predecessor authority.
2. The resolution to confer the title must be passed by a majority of at least two-thirds of members present at a specially convened Full Council meeting.
3. An Honorary Alderman/woman may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide. They are not entitled to receive any members’ allowances or other payments of allowances, expenses etc. Honorary Aldermen/women substitute for the Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor on a relatively infrequent basis. They are also invited to all major civic events, church services and can attend/observe Council meetings (they have no vote at Council meetings).
4. The Act does not define “eminent service” to the Council and it is therefore at the discretion of individual councils to determine what this might constitute for their individual authority. A number of councils have developed criteria designed to ensure a consistency of approach whilst at the same time allowing the flexibility to recognise what might constitute “eminent service” to the Council in all its many forms.
5. The Full Council is responsible for approving the policy and criteria governing the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women. The Audit Committee is responsible for ensuring that all nominations meet these criteria, as part of its role in ensuring ethical standards and probity within the City Council.

Revision of criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women

6. The Audit Committee reviewed the criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women on 29 January 2016.
7. The committee’s recommendations from that meeting were accepted by the Full Council at their meeting held on 15 March 2016. The criteria approved by Full Council on 15 March 2016 were as follows:

An individual will be eligible for nomination and appointment to the role of Honorary Alderman/woman provided that he/she is no longer a serving councillor with Bristol City Council and has provided eminent service to the Council throughout a long and distinguished period of public service by either:

a. Serving as a Bristol City Councillor for an aggregate total period of at least 10 years;

or

b. Holding a significant position of public responsibility with Bristol City Council as either:

- Lord Mayor;
- Elected Mayor;
- Deputy or Assistant Mayor;
- Leader of the Council;
- Executive Member;
- Any other position attracting the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance under the Council's approved members allowance scheme (excluding attendance at the Appeals Committee).

8. During the debate at the March 2016 Full Council meeting, it was suggested that in *any future review of the criteria*, the Audit Committee might wish to consider the following factors:
- a. The issue of whether it might be appropriate to define the qualifying length of councillor service in terms of the number of electoral terms served rather than in terms of the number of years served.
 - b. In relation to the issue of qualifying by virtue of having held a significant position of public responsibility with the Council, consideration might be given as to whether this should be subject to a minimum "length of office."
9. At their meeting held on 23 September 2016, the Audit Committee further reviewed the criteria, taking into account the comments of Full Council from the 15 March 2016 meeting.
10. On 23 September, the committee agreed to recommend that Full Council should consider and approve the following, revised criteria:

An individual will be eligible for nomination and appointment to the role of Honorary Alderman/woman provided that he/she is no longer a serving councillor with Bristol City Council and has provided eminent service to the Council throughout a long and distinguished period of public service by:

- a. **Serving for a minimum period of two electoral terms as a Bristol City councillor (i.e. having been elected twice as a councillor).**

AND

- b. **Holding a significant position of public responsibility with Bristol City Council, for a minimum period of one calendar year or one municipal year, as either:**
 - Lord Mayor;
 - Elected Mayor;
 - Deputy or Assistant Mayor;
 - Leader of the Council;
 - Executive Member;
 - Any other position attracting the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance under the Council's approved members allowance scheme (excluding attendance at the Appeals Committee).

OR

c. Long service as a Bristol City Councillor for an aggregate period of at least 10 years.

11. The Full Council is therefore asked to consider and approve the revised criteria as set out in paragraph 10 above.

Other Options Considered

Not applicable

Appendices: None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

Audit Committee minutes – 29 January 2016; 23 September 2016

Full Council minutes – 15 March 2016