

TITLE	Protocol for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen of Wokingham Borough Council and Changes to the Constitution
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Council on 19 May 2016
WARD	None specific
LEAD OFFICER	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The position of Honorary Alderman is intended to acknowledge the eminent services of past Members of the Council.

Reviewing the Council's Constitution on a regular basis ensures that it is relevant and fit for purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1) approve the Protocol for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen of Wokingham Borough Council as recommended by the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) and as set out in Appendix A;
- 2) note that if the Protocol is approved an Extraordinary Council meeting will be held on 9 June 2016 to consider a nomination that has been received for the role of Honorary Alderman;
- 3) approve the amendment to Rule 4.2.8 Duration of Meeting as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report;
- 4) note comments made by the Constitution Review Working Group concerning the rules of procedure relating to the length of motions as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

In accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 the report sets out a protocol by which in the future ex-Councillors could be considered to be conferred the title of Honorary Alderman.

In the light of issues raised at recent Council meetings the CRWG was asked to consider whether changes were required to various rules of procedure. This report provides a response to these requests and one change to the Constitution.

1. Honorary Aldermen

1.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the title of Honorary Alderman can be conferred on “persons who have, in the opinion of the Council rendered eminent services to the Council, but who are not then Councillors of the Council”.

1.2 In order to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on an ex-Councillor Council firstly has to approve a protocol which will set out the criteria for appointment and how the appointment would be conferred. A proposed Protocol for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen, which has been agreed by the outgoing Mayor, Leader of Council and the Constitution Review Working Group, is attached at Appendix A.

1.3 Members are asked to note that in order to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on an ex-Councillor a meeting of the whole Council would need to be convened specifically for this purpose and the resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the voting Members present at that meeting. If Council approve the Protocol it is proposed to hold an Extraordinary Council meeting on Thursday 9 June at 7.30pm to consider a nomination that has been received from the outgoing Mayor and the Leader of Council.

2. Changes to the Constitution

2.1 At the last Council meeting the Leader of Council asked the CRWG to consider whether changes were required to the rules of procedure relating to the length of motions. In addition Members had requested the CRWG to consider whether further clarification was required for the rule relating to the time limit for meetings.

2.2. The CRWG met on 19 April and considered among other things the above items. The following paragraphs contain the CRWG response to each item.

2.3 Length of Motions. The CRWG was provided with examples from other local authorities on how they dealt with motions however they felt that the motion should be more about content rather than length and that further guidance should be provided to Members on how to formulate a motion.

It was therefore agreed that changes to the wording in the Constitution were not required at the present time however the CRWG would review the matter in the future if it was felt that there was a need. The CRWG asked that in future Members submit motions which were to the point and as brief as possible whilst ensuring that the objective of the motion was conveyed.

2.4 Duration of Meeting. Following an issue at a recent Council meeting the CRWG agreed that the wording of Rule 4.2.8 did require further clarification. It was agreed that the intention of Rule 4.2.8 was that any extension would enable the meeting to continue for a further 30 minutes from the specified conclusion time i.e. from 10.30pm or 9.00pm for Annual Council. In order to avoid Members proposing an extension early on in a meeting, which might then not be necessary, additional wording was included to state that the extension could only be proposed up to 30 minutes before the conclusion time of the meeting. It is therefore proposed to amend Rule 4.2.8 as follows:

“4.2.8 Duration of Meeting

Unless the majority of Members present vote for the meeting to continue any meeting that has not concluded by 10.30pm will adjourn immediately. In respect of the Annual Council Meeting the conclusion time at which the meeting will adjourn is 9.00pm. If, once a Motion to continue the meeting under Rule 4.2.12(m) has been proposed and seconded, **(which can only be done up to 30 minutes before the conclusion time of the meeting)** the majority of Members present vote to continue, the meeting will continue for a further period not exceeding 30 minutes **from the specified conclusion time of the meeting i.e. until 11.00pm or 9.30pm for Annual Council.**”

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£800	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

£800 is required to purchase a Badge of Office, casket and Book of Honorary Aldermen. Costs will be met from the Mayor’s and Democratic Services’ budgets.

Costs associated with Changes to the Constitution will be met from the Democratic Services Budget

Cross-Council Implications

None

List of Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972
The Council’s Constitution

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