



## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

- MEETING** : Tuesday, 12th July 2016
- PRESENT** : Cllrs. Morgan (Chair), H. Norman (Vice-Chair), Haigh, Hilton, Taylor and Coole

### **Others in Attendance**

Jon McGinty, Managing Director  
Tanya Davies, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager  
Parvati Diyar, Democratic Services Officer

- APOLOGIES** : Councillor Hanman  
Shirin Wotherspoon, Head of Law (Commercial)  
Emma Cartlidge, HR Adviser

### **1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

The Committee noted the appointments made by Council at the Annual Meeting for Councillor Morgan as Chair and Councillor H Norman as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

There were no public questions.

### **4. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)**

There were no petitions and deputations.

### **5. RECOGNISING GOOD SERVICE TO THE CITY**

The Committee considered a report of the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager concerning mechanisms for recognising good service to the City. Members were asked to review and formalise the processes as detailed in the report.

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The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager advised that the report had been presented to the Constitutional and Electoral Working Group at its meeting on 22 March 2016. The report remained largely unchanged however amendments had been made to reflect the discussions of the Working Group and a protocol for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen had been added.

#### Honorary Freeman

Councillor Coole made a general observation, suggesting that the word 'Freeman' could be substituted for a more gender neutral word such as 'Freeperson'.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager advised that the legislation referred to Freeman and then Freewoman were added later. She would check the legislation before finalising the report.

#### Freedom of the Entry

The Committee noted that this would only apply to military units. Councillor Haigh enquired whether nominations are to be made by the units themselves or if this was a decision for Members to consider.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager commented that any proposals would require Group Leaders approval.

#### Mayor's Medal

Following discussions at the last Constitutional and Electoral Working Group, this process had been amended to note that the agreement of two-thirds of Group Leaders be required in order to proceed.

Councillor Haigh questioned why any agreement from Group Leaders was required if the choice of recipients was in the gift of the Mayor and then questioned why there was a lower threshold for Group Leader approval than for the other honours.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager explained that a lower threshold was proposed in recognition of it being the Mayor's choice, but that the approval of two thirds of Group Leader was proposed in order to provide a check and balance on the decision because it would be made by an individual.

The Committee agreed that this was acceptable.

#### Honorary Aldermen

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager commented that this was an additional appendix to the previous report and that a protocol was proposed should the Council decide to make use of the available powers. She explained that the nomination process and criteria were similar to the other protocols, but that the main difference was that the appointment came with a number of entitlements.

Councillor Haigh commented that she was opposed to the appointment of Honorary Aldermen and did not believe it was necessary to introduce such a protocol as it

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would put more burden on the Council. She was concerned about the limitation of two per year and the emphasis on long service, which was adequately recognised in the form of long service certificates, and stated that Honorary Alderman appointments were not necessary when other awards were already in place.

Councillor Hilton agreed with Councillor Haigh and commented that such appointments had been discussed in the past. He stated that choosing worthy candidates would be problematic and that it was likely that those who had served in a Civic role would be unfairly favoured.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager advised that the draft protocol could be amended.

Councillor H Norman disagreed and stated that she believed the Council should make use of the powers where appropriate; she noted that Group Leaders would have to agree all appointments. She suggested that the reference to length of service and the restriction on the number of appointments each year be removed.

Councillor Haigh moved an amendment to the effect of removing the proposed protocol for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen from the recommendations to Council. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Hilton.

The amendment was put to the vote and was lost.

The Chair stated that the report should proceed and Council should be given the opportunity to comment on all aspects.

Members discussed the proposed entitlements for Honorary Aldermen and agreed a number of changes, including a reference to which Civic events they should be invited to. They agreed to remove the reference to length of service and the restriction on the number of appointments each year. They also agreed that former Councillors who retired from service prior to the introduction of the protocol should not be eligible for nomination and that nominees must have concluded their service no more than 12 months prior to their nomination.

The Committee agreed to recommend a revised protocol to Council for approval.

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that:**

1. Subject to any further amendments, the process and criteria for the nomination of Honorary Freemen and Freedom of the City detailed in Appendix 1 be approved.
2. Subject to any further amendments, the process and criteria for nominations Freedom of the Entry detailed in Appendix 2 be approved.
3. Subject to any further amendments, the process for the nomination of recipients of the Mayor's Medal detailed in Appendix 3 be approved.

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4. Subject to any further amendments, the process, criteria and entitlements for the nomination of Honorary Aldermen detailed in Appendix 4 be approved with the following amendments:
- (a) Removal of the reference to long service.
  - (b) Removal of the restriction on the number of appointments each year.
  - (c) Inclusion of a restriction preventing Councillors who retired from service prior to the introduction of the protocol from being eligible.
  - (d) Inclusion of a restriction that nominees are only eligible within 12 months of their retirement from Council service.
  - (e) Specifying that attendance at Civic events is restricted to Remembrance Sunday, the Annual Civic Service and Gloucester Day.

**6. PENSIONS POLICY STATEMENT AND FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Finance relating to the revised Pension Policy Statement and Flexible Retirement Policy.

The Managing Director advised that the City Council were working with County HR to ensure employment policies were up to date and in line with Local Government Regulations. The Pension Policy Statement required updating and although the approach to discretions had not changed, they needed to be rolled over to the new regulations. The Flexible Retirement Policy also required updating.

Both policies reflected the ones used by the County Council and were easier to read.

The Committee were informed that the policies had been presented and agreed by Senior Management Team (SMT) and Trade Unions.

The Chair enquired about the responses received following consultation with the trade unions. The Democratic Services Officer advised that at the last meeting of the Trade Union Consultation meeting, trade unions had no comments and approved the policies.

**RESOLVED: That the policies be approved.**

**7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

City Council Website

Councillor Haigh raised concerns relating to the May election results displayed on the City Council's website. She said the information was misleading to the public as the figures did not show the percentage of the votes for the individual Councillor in the way that she would expect. She requested the information be altered to reflect this.

In response to a question by the Chair, the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager advised that the elections software was linked to the ModernGov system which created the results page and there was no ability to change the presentation of the results or add explanatory notes to the page.

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The Managing Director suggested that the ModernGov supplier be contacted to see if they could develop the software to enable the figures to be shown as requested or an additional page be created to display all 18 ward results declarations.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager was requested to contact ModernGov to look at alternative ways to display the results.

**8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, 18 October 2016 at 6.00pm.

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm hours**

**Time of conclusion: 6.45 pm hours**

**Chair**