

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Report Title	Honorary Alderperson Protocol
Meeting / Date	Council, 11 December 2025
Directorate	Resources
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Wards affected	None specifically
Public access	Open
Appendices	Appendix 1 - Draft Alderperson Protocol

1. Summary

- 1.1. Amendments to the Constitution are proposed following endorsement at the Constitution Working Group, and Audit and Governance Committee. The proposals are in relation to adopting a Protocol for Alderperson(s) to the Constitution.
- 1.2. This report suggests the adoption of a Protocol under which the award of Honorary Alderman, Honorary Alderwoman and Honorary Alderperson titles could be made and further proposes an amendment to the Council's Constitution to make explicit that decisions on proposals are reserved to the Council.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Council is recommended to:
 - 2.1.1. Adopt the Protocol at Appendix 1 of this report;
 - 2.1.2. Amend the responsibility for functions within the Constitution to make explicit that decisions to make awards under that protocol are reserved to the Full Council;
 - 2.1.3. Note that existing statutory powers to confer the titles of Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman be noted and the addition of a title of Honorary Alderperson be made in accordance with the Council's equality commitments.

3. Background

- 3.1. Under the provisions of Section 249 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 a principal council may, by 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 or alderwoman or alderperson on persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent, exceptional and distinguished services to the council, above such duties as are expected of councillor, as past members of that council.
- 3.2. Title recipients may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the council may from time to time decide but has no right to attend meetings of the Council or a committee in the capacity of a councillor, or receive any of the allowances or other payments to which councillors are entitled.
- 3.3. Only the Council of a London borough or a district which has the status of a city, borough or royal borough may spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address to a person upon whom it has conferred the title. Should the award of an honorary alderman title be agreed by the Council, it is suggested that officers be requested to organise an appropriate presentational ceremony in consultation with the mayor.

4. Proposal

- 4.1. Waltham Forest has hitherto not utilised this power contained in the Local Government Act 1972 to create Honorary Aldermen or Alderwomen or Alderperson, but the 2008 White Paper, 'Communities in Control; Real People, Real Power' suggested that

"where councillors lose their seats or retire often their experience and knowledge is lost to local government. We want more councils to recognise the contribution of former councillors and encourage their continuing involvement through existing powers to create Aldermen."
- 4.2. The Proper Officer will convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council to consider Aldermanic nominations if called upon to do so by either the Mayor or any five members of the Council by means of a signed requisition.
- 4.3. Minor revisions to the Constitution (responsibility for functions) to make explicit that awards of Aldermanic titles are a decision reserved to the Council.

5. Implications

- 5.1. Finance, Value for Money and Risk
 - 5.1.1. There are no new financial implications arising from the proposed amendment to the Constitution.
 - 5.1.2. A small financial implication has been identified for the procurement of badges of office. This can be managed within existing budgets.

5.2. Legal

5.2.1. The legal implications pertaining to governance issues are set out in the body of the report. The Local Government Act 1972 enabled principal councils to confer the title of Alderman to men or women. The Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 made provision for the award of the title of Alderwoman.

5.2.2. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

5.2.3. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

5.3. Equalities and Diversity

5.3.1. There is statutory provision for the award of the titles Alderman and Alderwoman. The addition of an additional title of Alderperson would be in accordance with Equality Act 2010 provisions

5.4. Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder).

5.4.1. There are no specific implications arising from the proposal in this report.

5.5. Council Infrastructure (e.g. human resources, accommodation or IT issues)

5.5.1. There are no specific implications arising from the proposal in this report.

Background Information (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None.