

Milton Keynes City Council

Protocol for the Award of Civic Honours

Honorary Aldermen

1. Appointment of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman

- 1.1 In accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may confer the title of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman on any former Councillor who it considers has provided eminent service to the Council. The term 'eminent services' is not defined in law so is a matter of local interpretation.
- 1.2 'Eminent service' will be defined for appointment at Milton Keynes City Council as an Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen as follows:
 - a) being a past member of the Council (or predecessor authority); and
 - b) have served 15 years in total, in aggregate, on the Council.
- 1.3 Upon retirement, qualifying Councillors will be canvassed to establish their interest in the honour and their availability to attend a special Council meeting to be appointed.
- 1.4 Appointments of Honorary Aldermen or Alderwomen must take place at a Council meeting specially convened for the purpose. The meeting can occur on the same date of another full council meeting. The nomination will be proposed and seconded.
- 1.5 Two thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in favour of a resolution for the nominee to be appointed as an Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman. The recipient will be presented with a certificate confirming the title by the Mayor and will be given an opportunity to address the Council for up to 15 minutes.
- 1.6 Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen cannot be appointed posthumously.

2. Rights and Responsibilities of Honorary Alderman / Alderwomen

- 2.1 The title of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman does not confer any special privileges or rights upon the appointee to speak or vote at Council meetings, beyond the rights and privileges already afforded to the public.
- 2.2 The only rights that are conferred to an Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman by virtue of their appointment is to be invited to Civic functions and events. The Council will decide which Civic functions and events it is appropriate to invite Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen to.

2.3 The role of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman is an honorary one, but to the public an Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman is perceived to be a representative of the Council. In accepting the honour, all Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen must agree and adhere to the protocol laid down by this Council. There are two key elements:

- a) That the person becoming an Alderman / Alderwoman does so in the full knowledge that they are perceived to be a Civic representative of the Council and must not bring the Council into disrepute.
- b) In taking this role, the Alderman / Alderwoman agrees to become apolitical in public when using the title of Alderman / Alderwoman; knowing that any views expressed may be interpreted as views of the Council.

3. Removal of Title of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman

3.1 There may be occasions where, due to the behaviour of individuals who have been appointed as Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen, the Council may wish to remove the title from an individual in order to protect the reputation of the Council.

3.2 Removal of the title of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman will procedurally follow the same process as appointment (proposed and seconded, and then a resolution of two thirds of those present must be passed in favour of removal). However, it may take place at any meeting of Full Council rather than a specially convened meeting.

3.3 Removal of the title of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman must be proposed by notice of motion (Council Procedure Rule 11.1) which must set out the circumstances of how an Alderman / Alderwoman has not acted in accordance with 2.3 a) or b).

3.4 Upon receipt of a motion to remove the title of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman, the Director of Law and Governance will notify an affected Alderman / Woman and offer the right of reply (either in writing, or in person, pursuant to public speaking rights).

3.5 Should the affected Alderman / Alderwoman indicate that they consent to the honour being removed, the motion will be moved, seconded, and put to the vote without debate.

Freedom of the City

4. Award of Freedom of the City

4.1 In accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may confer the Freedom of the City on any person, organisation, or military unit either in recognition of their exceptional service to the city, or because they are a person of distinction.

- 4.2 Any councillor may propose the award of Freedom of the City, in writing to the Director of Law and Governance, who will consult with the Leaders of Political Groups, to establish if there is sufficient consensus to achieve the required number of councillors in support of bestowing the honour. The nominated person, organisation, or military unit will then be canvassed to establish their interest and availability.
- 4.3 Awarding the Freedom of the City must take place at a Council meeting specially convened for the purpose. The meeting can occur on the same date of another full council meeting. The nomination will be proposed and seconded.
- 4.4 Two thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in favour of a resolution for the nominee to be awarded the Freedom of the City. They will be presented with a certificate conferring the title by the Mayor and will be given an opportunity to address the Council.
- 4.5 Freedom of the City is the highest honour that a council can grant and in order to preserve its status and value, conferment should be strictly limited to those who have made a very significant contribution to the City, or who is genuinely a person of distinction because of outstanding achievements.
- 4.6 Freedom of the City cannot be awarded posthumously.

5. Rights and Responsibilities of Freedom of the City

- 5.1 The award of Freedom of the City does not confer any special privileges or rights upon the appointee to speak or vote at Council meetings, beyond the rights and privileges already afforded to the public.

6. Removal of Freedom of the City

- 6.1 There may be occasions where, due to the behaviour of recipients of Freedom of the City, the Council may wish to remove the title in order to protect the reputation of the Council.
- 6.2 Removal of Freedom of the City will procedurally follow the same process as appointment (proposed and seconded, and then a resolution of two thirds of those present must be passed). However, it may take place at any meeting of Full Council rather than a specially convened meeting.
- 6.3 Removal of Freedom of the City must be proposed by notice of motion (Council Procedure Rule 11.1) and must set out how the recipient has behaved in such a way that the reputation of the City has been damaged.