

For publication

Update on Civic Arrangements 2020 - 2022 (GV000R)

Meeting: Council

Date: 15 July 2020

Cabinet portfolio: Governance

Report by: Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

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1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 To confirm arrangements for the civic years 2020/21 and 2021/22 in respect of the following:

- a) Election of Mayor
- b) Election of Deputy Mayor
- c) Revised date for the Annual Council Meeting
- d) Revised date for the Mayoral Dinner
- e) Revised date for the Annual Civic Service and Parade

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That Councillor Glenys Falconer be invited to become Mayor of the Borough for the period from October 2020 to May 2022.

2.2 That Councillor Tony Rogers be invited to become Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the period from October 2020 to May 2022.

3.0 **Background**

3.1 Each year the Council is asked to confirm its civic arrangements for the forthcoming municipal year, namely the appointment of Deputy Mayor, the date of the Annual Council meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the associated civic events.

3.2 Members approved a report on 26 February 2020 to invite Councillor Glenys Falconer to become Mayor of the Borough for 2020/21 and to invite Councillor Tony Rogers to become Deputy Mayor of the Borough for 2020/21. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, restrictions were implemented by the Government in March 2020 which resulted in the Council being unable to hold the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) and Annual Council Meeting (ACM) as planned, along with the associated Civic events: Mayoral Dinner, Civic Service and Civic Parade. Regulations made pursuant to the Coronavirus Act 2020 made it possible for local authorities to postpone their annual meetings.

3.3 This report proposes changes to the civic arrangements for the period July 2020 to May 2022 in light of the Covid-19 pandemic which have been subject to consultation with the leaders of the three political groups, the current Mayor, Mayoress and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elect.

3.4 This report was considered at the meeting of Cabinet on 23 June, 2020, where it was resolved:

1. That it be recommended to Full Council that Councillor Glenys Falconer be invited to become Mayor of the Borough for the period from October 2020 to May 2022.

2. That it be recommended to Full Council that Councillor Tony Rogers be invited to become Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the period from October 2020 to May 2022.
3. That it be noted that the Annual Council Meeting will be held on 21 October 2020, followed by a drinks' reception at the Town Hall, subject to Government restrictions in response to Covid-19.
4. That it be noted that the Annual Civic Service and Parade, and the Mayoral Dinner, will be delayed until May 2021.

4.0 **Annual Business Meeting and Annual Council Meeting**

- 4.1 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") provide for local authorities to alter the frequency, move or cancel annual meetings. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor, took the decision to postpone the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) and Annual Council Meeting (ACM) as a result of the ongoing restrictions and limitations arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the ABM will now take place on 14 October 2020 and the ACM on 21 October 2020.
- 4.3 Regulation 4(2) of the 2020 Regulations allow for appointments usually made at the annual meetings to continue until the next cycle of annual meetings or until such time as the authority decides.
- 4.4 The Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Constitution provide that the election of the Mayor can only be undertaken at the ACM, therefore, in line with the Council's Constitution

and Regulations, the current Mayoral term would continue until the ACM on 21 October 2020.

4.5 While the Local Government Act 1972 does not require the election of the Deputy Mayor to be undertaken at the ACM, this is the procedure chosen by the Council and is required by the Constitution. Therefore, in line with the Council's Constitution and Regulations, the current Deputy Mayoral term would also continue until the ACM on 21 October 2020.

5.0 **Mayoral Terms**

5.1 The election of Mayor as Chair of the Council and Deputy Mayor as Vice-Chair of the Council are statutory appointments under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972. The LGA 1972 also states that the election of the Mayor must be the first business transacted at the annual meeting (this Council's ACM).

5.2 Cabinet adopted the existing protocol for electing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in November 2006 (minute no. 124), continuing the practice adopted in 1995, namely:-

- a) That the Mayor will be the councillor with the longest service, and that priority between councillors with equal length of service will be governed by ascending alphabetical order of surname, without regard to membership of a political group.
- b) That the Deputy Mayor will be elected as Mayor after his or her year as Deputy Mayor.

The decision on 26 February 2020 departed from this protocol for the reasons stated in that report to Members.

5.3 Each year the Council elects a new Mayor at the ACM with the duration for the term of office for each Mayor being one year. The new Regulations only provide for the alteration of annual

meetings until May 2021; therefore the ACM will continue to take place in May in line with the Local Government Act 1972 from 2022 onwards.

- 5.4 To mitigate the negative impact that the restrictions due to Covid-19 will have on the 2020/21 Mayoral term, an emergency transition period is proposed for 2020/21 whereby the current Mayor, Councillor Gordon Simmons, and the Mayor Elect, Councillor Glenys Falconer, each serve as Mayor for 6 months.
- 5.5 At the ACM on 21 October 2020, Councillor Glenys Falconer would be proposed to be elected as Mayor of the Borough for the period from October 2020 to May 2022 to enable the Mayoral terms to return to the Council's protocol outlined in paragraph 5.2. Councillor Tony Rogers would be proposed to be elected as Deputy Mayor at the ACM in October, 2020 and his proposed term of office as Mayor would be deferred to 2022/23.

6.0 **Civic Arrangements 2020/21**

- 6.1 The Mayoral Dinner and Civic Parade and Service are important events in the life of the Borough. The Civic Parade and Service is the first opportunity for residents to see and support their new Mayor. In addition, the Mayoral Dinner is a large event which provides an opportunity for the Council to recognise those who have contributed to the civic life of the borough.
- 6.2 It is unclear when the Government will relax restrictions in order to allow large gatherings to take place again, people may also have reservations about meeting in large groups for some time.
- 6.3 The Mayoral Dinner and Civic Service and Parade usually take place as soon as possible after the ACM, namely the Saturday

following Mayor Making. In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, these significant events will instead take place in May 2021 to enable them to be delivered in a fitting manner and be attended by the residents of the Borough, Mayor's guests and local civic dignitaries.

7.0 **Recommendations**

7.1 That Councillor Glenys Falconer be invited to become Mayor of the Borough for the period from October 2020 to May 2022.

7.2 That Councillor Tony Rogers be invited to become Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the period from October 2020 to May 2022.

8.0 **Reasons for recommendations**

8.1 To enable the Council to revise and confirm the civic arrangements for 2020 to 2022 in light of the Covid-19 pandemic national emergency.

Decision information

Key decision number	<i>Non-key decision</i>
Wards affected	All wards
Links to Council Plan priorities	To provide value for money services and improve the quality of life for local people.

Document information

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