

Protocol on the nomination and appointment of Honorary Freeman and Honorary Aldermen for the London Borough of Havering

Background

The Council may admit a person of distinction as an honorary freeman of the borough in recognition of their eminent services to the borough; or confer the title of honorary alderman upon a past member of the Council in recognition of their services to the borough. This is done in accordance with the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

In recent years there has been a rapid increase in the number of nominations with an annual expectation that nominations will be made. On one occasion a motion did not achieve the required majority causing embarrassment to the nominee and his family. With the Council having now 5 groups it is desirable to have a cross-group accord to ensure that the honour is regarded as the highest accolade a Council can award and not an annual routine and that a nominee has sufficient support to command the two thirds majority. A protocol in the following form is therefore adopted in order to achieve this. Such a protocol does not remove the constitutional rights of members of the Council but signifies a process which has general support.

Protocol

1. Save for exceptional circumstances, nomination will only be made once a year at the Annual Council Meeting.
2. It will not be expected that there must be nomination every year.
3. Before a nomination for an honour is made there should be a meeting of Group Leaders to discuss and evaluate the proposal. Consideration will be given to the suitability for a Mayor's Civic Award as a suitable alternative.
4. Group Leaders will try and reach agreement if possible in order to ensure a requisite majority.
5. Once Group Leaders have discussed the matter Governance Committee shall consider the matter and be able to make a recommendation to confer the honour to Council following the receipt of a report prepared by the Committee Administration Manager.
6. The Group Leaders' discussion and the consideration of the report to Governance Committee shall be confidential out of respect for the nominees.

7. Once agreement has been reached by Group Leaders they will seek to ensure that their Groups adhere to the agreement to avert embarrassment to the nominee. In the absence of agreement from Group Leaders that makes it clear that the required majority will be achieved or, even if the required majority can be achieved, that one Group will vote or speak against the nomination, it will still be the prerogative of any Group Leader to nominate as they see fit. In such circumstances it will be the nominating Group Leader's responsibility to warn the nominee that some members of the council may speak or vote against the nomination and that it therefore may not be agreed.