

Grants and Awards Task and Finish Group

Date: 14th October 2019

Title: Awards

Purpose of the Report: To consider future options in respect of Awards, following changes in legislation in respect of civic awards.

Contact Officer: Sarah Sandiford, Head of Democratic and Central Services

Corporate Objective/s	To consolidate processes and procedures, ensuring operational efficiency.	
Implications:		
Financial	√	Current provision is £300/year
Human Resources		
Operational/Service delivery		
Legal	√	Changes in legislation from January 2010 as set out in NALC's Legal Topic Note 12

1. RECOMMENDATION

To consider and put forward to the Grants and Awards Sub-Committee recommendations in respect of an award scheme to take effect from 2020-21 onwards.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 At its meeting held 29 July 2019, the Policy and Finance Committee received a report regarding changes in legislation and the potential impact on the Town Council's annual Honorary Burgess award scheme, run since 2006 as a mechanism by which to acknowledge and reward long-term voluntary service to the benefit of the town.

2.2 Changes to legislation set out that since 12 January 2010, all local councils have had powers to confer the title of "honorary freeman" or "honorary freewoman" to persons of distinction and those who, in the council's opinion, have rendered eminent services to the parish (section 249(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1972).

- 2.3 A Legal Topic Note issued in March 2013 by the National Association of Local Councils sets out that given this change in powers, it is no longer necessary, or possible, for local councils to confer other titles.
- 2.4 Advice sought from NALC on this subject stated that it was not possible to continue any other scheme which might be perceived to be a civic honour.
- 2.5 Legal advice sought from the SLCC agreed with this point, but suggested that the Council could provide other awards through the General Power of Competence, which sets out that Councils may do “anything that individuals generally may do”, unless specific legislation is in place to dictate otherwise.
- 2.6 The SLCC advice states that an individual could, in theory, give an award to recognise voluntary service and recognises that many past and present philanthropists have indeed done so.
- 2.7 On this basis, the Town Council could continue with an annual award for long-term voluntary service but this award would need to be clearly designated not a civic award, as the only civic award the Council may bestow is that of Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of the parish.

3. AWARD OPTIONS

- 3.1 Changing the existing Honorary Burgess scheme may be as simple as renaming it – but keeping all other aspects such as procedures and eligibility (**attached** as Appendix A) the same – or could incorporate additional changes such as the introduction of specific categories of award.
- 3.2 A review of the parish/town council sector highlights that a range of names exist for volunteer award schemes, including:

- “X” Town Awards
- “X” Town Council Awards
- Community Awards
- Volunteer Awards
- Community Volunteer Awards
- Lifetime Volunteer Awards
- Long Service Volunteer Awards
- Mayor’s Volunteer Awards
- Civic Awards
- Honorary Civic Awards
- Be Proud Awards
- Volunteer Star Awards
- Pride of “X” Awards
- Community Champion Awards
- Citizen of the Year Awards

The variety and type of naming conventions indicate that many parish councils are as yet unaware of the changes in legislation relating to civic awards.

- 3.3 Some councils are offering awards in various categories, including for example: lifetime service award, young volunteer of the year, employer of the year.
- 3.4 During the Honorary Burgess scheme, recipients have been awarded an engraved medal and a framed certificate. Awards have been presented by the Town Mayor, either at a specific ceremony or latterly as part of the Civic Service.
- 3.5 There is an annual budget provision of £300 within the revenue budget for expenses relating to the Honorary Burgess scheme.

4. CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Task and Finish Group is asked to consider and put forward recommendations to the Grants and Awards Sub-Committee for a future award scheme from 2020-21 onwards, to include:
 - Eligibility criteria
 - Procedure
 - Nature of award
 - Presentation ceremony
 - Naming of award
 - Budgetary requirements
- 4.2 The Task and Finish Group may also wish to consider any recommendations in respect of celebrating and thanking volunteers generally, outside the scope of any specific awards to individuals.

End.