

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Governance	Council	17 November 2020

MAYORAL YEARS 2020/21 AND 2021/22

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To propose the extension of the current mayoral year to include the municipal year 2021/22.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That the current Mayor of Chorley, Cllr Steve Holgate be appointed to the role of Mayor for the municipal year 2021/22.
3. That the current Deputy Mayor of Chorley, Cllr Julia Berry, be appointed to the role of Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2021/22.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

4. The Covid-19 pandemic and the imposition of lockdown restrictions has had a significant impact on the activities the mayor has been able to undertake this year and have effectively prevented the operation of the mayoralty.
5. It has not been felt appropriate, given social distancing, for the mayor to be able to undertake the usual community driven activities which depend on a public presence. Even when such events are appropriately managed the presence of the Mayor often brings greater public attention which would lead to potential breaches of the restrictions. Given the function of the mayor sits within the Council and the Council have clear public health duties to residents it gives the wrong message should the mayor continue to undertake their usual duties.
6. Given the continued lockdown and the uncertainty over when this will end, it is proposed to suspend the mayoral year, for all but Council directed activities.
7. As this clearly limits the mayoral year for the incumbent it is only fair to enable a second opportunity to discharge the role the following year.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	X	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	

BACKGROUND

9. Covid -19 and the consequential social distancing restrictions have severely limited the activities the Mayor of Chorley has been able to undertake. Despite a proactive approach by the Mayor including an increased social media presence and the use of online fund-raising, the Council have been unable to support many of the events that the Mayor would usually attend.
10. The Council have considered our role as community leader, and our obligations in relation to public health. It has been concluded particularly during the lockdown periods that for the Mayor to be seen supporting events in person would send out the wrong message to the public in relation to social distancing, even where events are well managed in line with legislative and guidance requirements.
11. The recent extension to the lockdown restrictions, with no clear end to them, has made it unlikely that the usual mayoral appointments and engagements will be reinstated. To date the Mayor has been unable to hold their civic reception and has recently had to cancel plans for the charity ball.

PROPOSAL

12. It is therefore proposed to effectively cancel this mayoral year, asking the Mayor to only discharge necessary civic functions such as chairing council or appearing on behalf of the Council at Remembrance Day Services. All charity and community work will be discontinued.

REASONS

13. The Council have a role as a civic and community leader. This is particularly so when it this role support functions and responsibilities of the Council. The Council have a lead role in enforcement of Environmental Health breaches relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. We have also played a key supporting role to residents enabling them to maintain lockdown restrictions and comply with social distancing.
14. It is not appropriate for the Council to be seen to undermine the lockdown restrictions. Mayoral attendance at events is not generally required, it is optional. The mayors attendance could not only be perceived as a breach of the lockdown restrictions, but it brings greater public attention to events and may in fact lead to a greater level of attendance. Whilst the events themselves may well be appropriately managed, with suitable risks mitigations in place, these could easily be overrun should to many members of the public attend.
15. It is proposed to extend the year to include the municipal year 2021/22 as this would seem fair on the incumbent Mayor. Whilst the role of First Citizen of the Borough is a duty not a reward, it would be unfair to prevent the current office holder from discharging the duty to the full extent they would like.

APPROACH OF OTHER AUTHORITIES

16. Preston City Council extended the Mayoral year of the incumbent mayor in 2019/20 for the year 2020/21.
17. South Ribble Borough Council split the municipal year 2020/21 between the incumbent for 2019/20 and 2020/21 with the new mayor taking over in September 2020 to serve until the end of municipal year 2021/22.
18. The proposal is not too dissimilar to those adopted elsewhere.

IMPACT

19. The only impact is to delay the change in Mayor.
20. This has a knock effect for the Deputy Mayor but beyond that no council decisions have been made as to the next incumbent.

FINANCIAL AND CHARITIES

21. If proposal to extend the Mayors role to the year is accepted then the mayoral allowance will be stopped. Council may choose to enable the award of unspent mayoral budgets to the mayors charities. However, this would give a double benefit to the charities who would receive 2 consecutive years support. The cost would be negligible however, and given the impacts of covid generally, this additional support would almost certainly be welcomed.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

22. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	X	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	X	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

23. No risks identified.

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

24. The proposed charitable contributions will be taken and contained within existing budgets.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

25. No comments

CHRIS MOISTER
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE

Report Author	Ext	Date
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