

History of office and role of Mayor

The Office of Mayor was brought to this country by the Normans who also brought the Domesday Book and the Feudal System.

The word "Mayor" is derived from the Latin "magnus" meaning great or powerful. The first Mayoral town was Thetford in 1199.

The early Mayor was re-elected for several years and was the town's magistrate; he often had only the previous Mayor to assist him. His powers included the power to arrest those disturbing the peace, he presided over the civil and criminal courts and he had power to regulate the size of loaves of bread.

By 17th century additional powers followed such as Chairman of the Council, Chief Magistrate, Borough Coroner and keeper of the Borough jail.

By the 19th century it was suggested that the Mayor had three roles

- Constitutional Monarch for the City
- Speaker for the Council
- Prime Minister

His term of office at this time was between 2-4 years and the Mayor would attend all Committees and as a result held the whole Council together to co-ordinate and integrate its activities.