

## POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Corporate Performance Panel		
DATE:	21 July 2021		
TITLE:	Report of the Informal Working Group – Honorary Freedom of the Borough		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Policy Development		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Leader		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Samantha Winter		
OPEN/EXEMPT	OPEN	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	Yes

### **REPORT OF THE INFORMAL WORKING GROUP – HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH**

SUMMARY:
<p>The original criteria for the award of the Freedom of Borough were approved by Council in September 2002. They are attached as an appendix.</p> <p>Following the submission of a notice of motion 8/19 to Council on 28 November 2019 by Councillor Rust, (attached as an Appendix) which was referred to the Corporate Performance Panel for consideration an informal working group was set up to look at the Motion along with the existing criteria in order to review.</p>
ISSUES FOR THE PANEL TO CONSIDER:
<p>The Corporate Performance Panel are invited to consider the criteria set out at 1 to 7 below and identify any other criteria for consideration prior to forward the report to Cabinet for approval.</p>
RECOMMENDATIONS:
<p>The Corporate Performance Panel to recommend to Cabinet the criteria for consideration set out at 1 to 7 below.</p>
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:
<p>To enable the Borough Council to consider future Honorary Freedom of the Borough nominations in accordance with the criteria set out at 1 to 7 above.</p>

#### **1. Introduction**

At its meeting on 2 September 2020, the Corporate Performance Panel resolved that a non-political informal working group be set up, the membership of which to be:

Councillors B Ayres (Vice Chair), S Dark (Chair), Mrs A Dickinson, C Hudson and S Nash.

The informal working group met on 8 October 2020 and they acknowledged that the award of the Freedom of the Borough should be an exceptional event, bearing in mind the number of different awards for service and work that were available across the organisation.

The Working Group in looking at the existing criteria agreed that the existing guidelines for the award of the Freedom of the Borough were generally sound with the exception of the criteria regarding ex councillors being able to be awarded it until 10 years post service as this was considered unfair to retiring councillors who would be less able to be nominated than any other citizen of the Borough. It was therefore recommended to delete this element. The Group also felt that the additional inclusive elements suggested in Councillor Rust's Notice of Motion be included in part 4.

Although the Standards Board did not currently have this in its terms of reference, it was felt that this would be an appropriate proportional body to consider applications in the first instance. A point was also raised by a member that the award should not be political.

It was also agreed that the detail of the award should be included on the Council's website along with other awards which could be nominated to.

Therefore, it was agreed that the following criteria should be used:

1. Making the award should be an exceptional event.
2. Organisations as well as individuals should be eligible.
3. Recipients should be persons who, or organisations which, have given outstanding service to the Borough, they may include: Artistic and cultural endeavours; business, growth and prosperity; charitable work; improvement to built and natural environment; religious and spiritual life; sports activities; civic service; community cohesion; racial diversity; or any other service considered to be an asset to the Borough.
4. Persons nominating may do so at any time and should do so in writing giving reasons and providing 5 referees to testify to the nominee's worthiness, two of whom at least should be currently resident citizens of the Borough.
5. Nominations received should be business 'exempt' from publicity and considered first by the Standards Board and comments from individual Council members should be invited and reported to it.  
NB: If this process is agreed by Council, the functions remitted to that Board be updated accordingly at the next opportunity.
- 6 Anyone granted the Honorary Freedom of the Borough should take formal precedence after the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on civic occasions; and
- 7 Anyone granted the Honorary Freedom of the Borough should receive a badge (similar to an Honorary Alderman's) and an illuminated scroll.

**AGREED:** 1) The Democratic Services Manager revise the current criteria as set out below, and circulate to the informal working group for agreement prior to the next meeting (this was done remotely):

- Include: Artistic and cultural endeavours; business, growth and prosperity; charitable work; improvement to built and natural environment; religious and spiritual life; sports activities' civic service' community cohesion; racial diversity; or any other service considered to be an asset to the Borough.
- Delete 11: Any former council member will remain ineligible for nomination for 10 years after they cease to be a councillor, be deleted from the current criteria.

2) Guidance notes be published on the Borough Council's website informing the public how to nominate a person for the award.

3) Nominations received to be assessed by the Borough Council's Standards Committee who would make a recommendation to Cabinet.

## **2. Proposal**

The Corporate Performance Panel are invited to consider the criteria set out at 1 to 7.

## **3. Issues for the Panel to Consider**

The Corporate Performance Panel are invited to consider the criteria set out at 1 to 7 above and identify any other criteria for consideration prior to the report being presented to Cabinet for approval.

## **4. Corporate Priorities**

Not applicable.

## **5. Financial Implications**

None.

## **6. Any other Implications/Risks**

None.

## **7. Equal Opportunity Considerations**

The equality of applications/awards would have to be considered each time.

## **8. Environmental Considerations**

None.

## **9. Conclusion**

To enable the Borough Council to grant future Honorary Freedom of the Borough in accordance with the criteria set out at 1 to 7 above.

## **10. Background Papers**

Minutes of the Corporate Performance Panel 2 September 2020.  
Minutes of the Informal Working Group 8 October 2020.

## Appendix

"Sept 2002 - Criteria

CAB110: **HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH.**

The report invited Cabinet to consider the draft guidelines from the Standards Board in order to make recommendations to Council on suggested criteria for the award of Freedom of the Borough Status. In discussing the criteria, it was suggested that another should be added preventing any Councillor from being nominated with 10 years of ceasing being a councillor.

**RECOMMENDED:** That Council be recommended to agree to formalise the advice of the Standards Board, reached at its May and June meetings, in these terms.

1. The public announcement of reviving the tradition should be through a press conference;
2. Any award approved during this municipal year should be made formally at the Annual Meeting of Council on May 15th 2003 and arrangements on subsequent occasions thereafter judged on each occasion;
3. Making the award should be an exceptional event;
4. Organisations as well as individuals should be eligible;
5. Recipients should be persons who, or organisations which, have given outstanding service to the Borough
6. Persons nominating may do so at any time and should do so in writing giving reasons and providing 5 referees to testify to the nominee's worthiness, two of whom at least should be currently resident citizens of the Borough;
7. Nominations received should be business 'exempt' from publicity and considered first by the Standards Board and comments from individual Council members should be invited and reported to it;
8. If this process is agreed by Council, the functions remitted to that Board be updated accordingly at the next opportunity; *(NB The make up of the Standards Committee was changed in June 2012, and now no longer has this element in its terms of reference so goes to Cabinet).*
9. Anyone granted the Honorary Freedom of the Borough should take formal precedence after the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on civic occasions; and
10. Anyone granted the Honorary Freedom of the Borough should receive a badge (similar to an Honorary Alderman's) and an illuminated scroll.

11. Any former council member will remain ineligible for nomination for 10 years after they cease to be a councillor.”