

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a Key Decision and has been included in the relevant Forward Plan

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CORE SERVICES TO CABINET 10 MARCH 2021

FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to commence the process for the award of the Freedom of the Borough.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Cabinet approve the proposed amendments to the policy and guidance notes for nominations for the award of Freedom of the Borough set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report; namely to:-**

- (i) include an additional nomination criterion for an individual who has made an outstanding contribution during 2020/21 in relation to the pandemic; and**
- (ii) set out that the resolution to admit an honorary freeman/freewoman must be supported by not less than two thirds of the members of the relevant authority who vote on it, in line Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (paragraph 8b).**

- 2.2 **That the timeline set out at Paragraph 4.8 of the report be agreed.**

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, provides that 'a relevant Authority may admit to be honorary Freemen or honorary Freewomen of the place or area for which it is the Authority (a) persons of distinction, and (b) persons who have, in the opinion of the Authority, rendered evident services to that place or area'.

- 3.2 The Council has used this power on 7 occasions: in June 2000 to admit Rita Britton and Harold Dickie Bird, MBE, November 2007 to admit the Rt. Hon. The Lord Mason of Barnsley and again in June 2016 to admit Kate Rusby, David Moody, Professor Joan Fletcher and Ian McMillan. All seven people were admitted on the basis of citations, which identified the contributions that they had made:-

- (i) Rita Britton ... in recognition of her eminent contributions to the image, wellbeing and development of the Borough, both as a recognised leader within the national and international fashion industry and as a successful local business woman who has conspicuously used and shared this success to the benefit of the community including the development of the Barnsley**

Design Centre to encourage young designers to keep their skills within the Region.

- (ii) Harold “Dickie” Bird, M.B.E. ... in recognition of the success he has achieved locally, nationally and internationally in his chosen and lifelong commitment to cricket and the pleasure and honour this has given to the community and in particular for his consistent endeavours in promoting the image of and acting as a world-wide ambassador for the Borough.
- (iii) The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mason of Barnsley ... in recognition of over fifty years of eminent service to the Borough of Barnsley as a trade unionist, parliamentarian, and Minister of the Crown under two prime ministers, holding high office of state; most notably for Defence and Northern Ireland, privy councillor and Peer of the Realm.
- (iv) Kate Rusby ...in recognition of the success she has achieved locally, nationally and internationally as a singer songwriter ad has used and shared this success to the benefit of the community raising funds for local charities.
- (v) David Moody ... in recognition of his work as Lord-Lieutenant of South Yorkshire 2004-15 and the pleasure and honour this has given to the community and in particular for his consistent endeavours in promoting the image of the Borough and acting as its ambassador.
- (vi) Professor Joann Fletcher ... in recognition of the success she has achieved locally, nationally and internationally in her chosen and lifelong career as an Egyptologist and in particular her close relationship with Barnsley Museums and Schools and for promoting the image of the Borough.
- (vii) Ian McMillan ... in recognition of his work as a Yorkshire Poet, journalist, playwright ad broadcaster and the success he has achieved locally and abroad and in particular for his consistent endeavours in promoting the image of the Borough.

4. PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION

- 4.1 In September 2014, full Council agreed the adoption of the policy and procedure for the consideration of admission of future honorary Freemen or Freewomen attached at Appendix 1. More detailed guidance and the nomination form template are attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.2 The Policy sets out the criteria to be used in considering such people, taking account of their prominence in the local community, the benefit to the local area arising from the services they have rendered to the Borough and the period over which they have done this.
- 4.3 Agreement is sought to include an additional nomination criterion for 2021, to include individuals who have made an outstanding contribution in relation to the pandemic and additional guidance as to this criteria will be provided at the time of seeking nomination.

- 4.4 Any nomination for a person to be admitted as an Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of the Borough must have the support of at least 10 members of the Council eligible to vote on such a matter.
- 4.5 Nominations will be considered by a Panel to be chaired and convened by the Leader of the Council. The Panel will be composed of elected Members and, where appropriate, community representatives. Elected Member representation will be balanced to represent the political balance of the Council overall. The Panel will be advised by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director, Core Services or their nominees.
- 4.6 The Council last used this power in June 2016, so the end of the 5-year cycle outlined within the Policy is approaching. It is therefore proposed to commence the process and seek nominations from elected Members. Given the approaching election cycle, a return date for nominations of 31 May 2021 is proposed.
- 4.7 Whilst it is recognised that the current global pandemic may impact on certain arrangements, it is possible for the deliberation panel to be held virtually if required. Arrangements as to the full Council meeting and ceremonial process will be reviewed in light of Government legislation and guidance at that time.
- 4.8 The following timeline is proposed:-
- 31 May 2021 – deadline for receipt of completed nomination forms
 - June / July 2021 – panel arranged to consider nominations
 - September 2021 – special meeting of full Council to be arranged

5. CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

- 5.1 That nominations for the award of the Freedom of the Borough not be considered.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE/SERVICE USERS

- 6.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Whilst there are no direct financial or procurement implications associated with the commencement of the process governing the award of the Freedom of the Borough, there will be one-off costs at the time that the Council determines that it wishes to make an award. These will include the purchase of freedom scrolls and if Covid-19 restrictions permit, the holding of a Civic Reception following the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council as detailed below:

One off Costs (estimates)	Cost
Scrolls and Caskets (6 x £1.5k)	£ 9.0k
Civic Reception (£45 x 100)	£ 4.5k
Total	£13.5k

These costs will be contained within existing resources and be met from the budget for the Civic Office.

8. EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Whilst there are implications for staff in preparing for a Freedom of the Borough ceremony, these are accounted for in the staffing resource requirement for the Governance Unit.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Council is authorised to admit honorary freemen and freewomen of the Borough by virtue of section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972. Whilst the honorary award does not confer any rights it is the Council's highest formal public recognition of an individual's service to Barnsley
- 9.2 Paragraph 4d of the Council's policy (Appendix 1) states that the resolution to admit an honorary freeman/freewoman must be supported unanimously. However, paragraph 8b of the aforementioned legislation, stipulates that the resolution must be passed by not less than two thirds of the members of the relevant authority who vote on it. It is therefore proposed to amend Part D of the Policy in line with the legislation.

10. CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

11. COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The protocol detailing the decision-making process for the award of the Freedom of the Borough sets out the consultation process prior to any recommendation being submitted to Council.

13. THE CORPORATE PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

14. PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

15. TACKLING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

16. TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

17. REDUCTION OF CRIME AND DISORDER

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

18. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

There are no risks directly associated with this report.

19. HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESILIENCE ISSUES

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

20. COMPATIBILITY WITH THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

21. CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

23. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Policy for the Admission of People to be Honorary Freemen/Freewomen of the Borough

Appendix 2: Nomination for Admission as a Freeman / Freewoman of the Borough Guidance Notes and Nomination Form

24. BACKGROUND PAPERS

24.1 Policy for The Admission of People to be Honorary Freemen/Freewomen of the Borough, Report to Cabinet, 30 July 2014

24.2 Policy for The Admission of People to be Honorary Freemen/Freewomen of the Borough, Report to Council, 25 September 2014

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

Report author: Carol Tague, Head of Governance

Financial Implications/Consultation



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(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer where no financial implications)