

## **Meeting of the Council - 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

### **Freedom of the Borough Appointments**

#### **Report of the Chief Executive**

#### **Purpose Of Report**

1. To consider criteria for determining the circumstances in which the Council should be recommended to bestow the Freedom of the Borough.

#### **Background**

2. Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council, at an extraordinary meeting called specifically for the purpose and by a resolution passed by at least two thirds of members present and voting, to admit to be an Honorary Freeman of the Borough :-

- (a) any person of distinction or
- (b) any person who has, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Borough.

3. To date the Council has conferred the honour on :-

William Percy Drew  
October 12<sup>th</sup> 1978

Joseph Jones, OBE, JP  
October 12<sup>th</sup> 1978

Bert Bissell, MBE  
February 19<sup>th</sup> 1981

Councillor William Eley Homer  
March 9<sup>th</sup> 1989

Councillor John Thomas Wilson  
March 9<sup>th</sup> 1989

Councillor John James Curley  
January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1992

Councillor Frederick Stuart Hunt  
May 18<sup>th</sup> 2000

The 37<sup>th</sup> Signal Regiment (Volunteers)  
May 18<sup>th</sup> 2000

The Mercian Regiment  
October 15<sup>th</sup> 2007

The Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry  
February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2010

4. However, the Council has not previously articulated any criteria for making decisions on whether to admit any person as a Freeman i.e. what might constitute “a person of distinction” or “eminent service to the Borough”.
5. This issue was raised at the extraordinary meeting of the Council on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012 when a Member Working Group was appointed with the task of recommending appropriate criteria for conferring this honour.
6. The Member Working Group met on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and by a majority agreed to recommend that the Council adopt the following criteria:-
  - (a) A branch of the armed forces with a particular connection with the Borough.
  - (b) Any person born in the Borough or with a particular connection with the Borough who has made an eminent contribution to charity or voluntary work locally, nationally or internationally.
  - (c) Any person born in the Borough or with a particular connection with the Borough who has made an eminent contribution to the life of the Borough or to the nation, in the fields of culture, medicine, science, social care, the economy, education, public service, politics, sport or entertainment.
7. The Council would also take into account whether an individual has received an honour from Her Majesty the Queen or any other prestigious award
8. The Member Working Group (by a majority) also recommend formalising the mechanism for making a recommendation. In the first instance a nomination may be made to the Leader of the Council and the Leaders of each political group would consider whether or not a recommendation should be made, based on the agreed criteria. The

Member Working Group would then consider the recommendation together with a report from the Chief Executive setting out the basis on which the nominee satisfies the criteria. The recommendation of the Member Working Group would then be referred to each political group before a recommendation to the Council is finalised.

9. During this process Members will respect the confidentiality of the nominee until there is a formal public announcement by the Council.

### **Finance**

10. The cost involved with any decision to make a Freedom of the Borough appointment is met from within existing budgets.

### **Law**

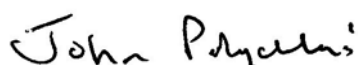
11. The relevant legislation has already been explained in paragraph 2 of this report.

### **Equality Impact**

12. This report has no implications for the Council's policies on equality and diversity. There are no direct implications for children and young people and, therefore, there has been no consultation or involvement of external groups in developing the proposals.

### **Recommendation**

13. The Council is recommended to agree the criteria set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 of this report and to approve the mechanism for making a recommendation outlined in paragraphs 8 and 9.



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JOHN POLYCHRONAKIS  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### **List of Background Papers**

1. Report of Chief Executive to the meeting of the Member Working Group on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012.