

Extraordinary Meeting of the Council – 22nd February 2010

Report of the Chief Executive

Honorary Freeman

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a Freeman of the Borough Appointment pursuant to Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Background

2. Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Council may, by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting thereon, admit to be an Honorary Freeman of the Borough, persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough.
3. The Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry is a Reserve Armoured Corps (Yeomanry) Regiment which was formed originally in 1794 with the Staffordshire Yeomanry (one of the predecessor Regiments) raising a Troop in Himley in 1819. The Queen's Own Worcestershire Yeomanry (another predecessor Regiment) had one troop located in Stourbridge and another in Dudley in the 1830s. Association has continued between the Regiment and local area for almost 200 years with many local people filling the ranks of the Regiment as volunteers and they have been deployed overseas to fight in the Boer War, 1st and 2nd World Wars and many other operations since.
4. In recent years, the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry has provided in the region of 200 soldiers in support of UK operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Presently soldiers are preparing for a larger scale deployment of some 40 soldiers to Afghanistan in August 2010 and they are mandated to provide replacement Challenger 2 Tank crewmen to the Regular Armed Regiments. They also deploy individual and larger scale augmentation as and when required and can assist the Civil Authorities when tasked by the Government to assist in local crises such as the foot and mouth outbreak, fire strike and flooding in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire in 2008.
5. Should the Council resolve to admit the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry to be an Honorary Freeman of the Borough, it has been customary that a presentation ceremony be held to award the honour to the recipient(s).

Finance

6. The cost involved with a decision to make a Freedom of the Borough appointment will depend on the nature of any proposed presentation ceremony. Any such costs will need to be identified from within existing budgetary provisions.

Law

7. The legal powers, the effects of which are described in Section 2 above, are contained in Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 1972.

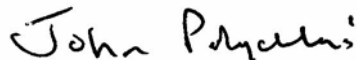
Equality Impact

8. 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.

Recommendations

9. That the Council determine whether to admit the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough in accordance with paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this report.

10. That should it be decided to admit the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry, the Chief Executive be authorised to make the necessary arrangements for a presentation ceremony.



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John Polychronakis
Chief Executive