

Committee: Standards and General Purposes

Date: 9 March 2017

Wards: All

Subject: Freedom of the Borough

Lead officer: Paul Evans, Assistant Director of Corporate Governance

Lead member: Councillor Peter McCabe, Chair, Standards and General Purposes Committee

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Recommendation:

That the Standards and General Purposes Committee establish a small working group to consider nominations for the award of freedom of the borough and report back to the Committee.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. At its meeting on 2 April 2014, at the recommendation of the then General Purposes Committee, Council agreed criteria and procedures for considering nominees for the freedom of the borough. These are set out in section 2 of this report.
- 1.2. A number of nominations are currently under discussion by the political groups.
- 1.3. It is recommended that the Committee establish a small working group to consider these nominations and report its findings back to the Committee.

2 CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR AWARDING FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

Criteria

- 2.1. Freedom of the Borough is a high honour which should only be awarded in exceptional circumstances where the prospective recipient is an individual or organisation of distinction and has rendered eminent services to the borough.
- 2.2. Candidates should have a strong and continuing connection with and commitment to Merton or have made a major contribution to national life and in doing so have enhanced the reputation of the borough.
- 2.3. Candidates should have made a substantial contribution to the borough in any area of activity, which could include:
 - artistic and cultural endeavours
 - business, economic growth and prosperity
 - charitable work

- improvement to the built and natural environment
- religious and spiritual life
- sports activities
- civic service

2.4. The award may be granted posthumously.

Procedures

- 2.5. Nominations for persons or organisations to be granted Freedom of the Borough, may be made by any serving Member of the Council to the Monitoring Officer on the appropriate form. The Member should first raise the matter for discussion within their political group.
- 2.6. Once a nomination is received, the Monitoring Officer will check that sufficient information has been provided on the form and will pass it to the Standards and General Purposes Committee for consideration.
- 2.7. The Monitoring Officer will write to all councillors at least once during the four yearly municipal cycle, preferably at or near the midpoint, to draw their attention to the opportunity to make nominations
- 2.8. The Standards and General Purposes Committee may establish a small working group to informally assess nominations and the likelihood of meeting the 2/3 criteria. The working group would report back to the Standards and General Purposes Committee in regard to any nominee who it believed would meet the criteria and achieve sufficient support at Council.
- 2.9. The Standards and General Purposes Committee shall report to Council and, should Council accept the nomination, a Special Meeting of Council would then be called to pass the resolution as required by Section 248 of the Local Government Act 1972.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. Council may choose to agree alternative criteria and/or procedures.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Nominations are at an early stage and have been discussed within political groups.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. To be determined by the Standards and General Purposes Committee.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

Any expenditure associated with conferring the Honorary Freedom of the Borough will be from existing budgets.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Section 249 (paragraphs 5 and 6) of the Local Government Act 1972 states:

(i) (5) The Council of a London Borough... may, by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, admit to the borough persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent services to the borough”

(ii) (6) The Council of a London Borough...may spend such reasonable sum as they think fit for the presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person upon whom they have conferred the title of (honorary alderman) or admitted to be an honorary freeman of the ...borough..

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix A – nomination form

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

NOMINATION FOR FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

1. Name of the person or organisation being nominated for Freedom of the Borough.

2. Freedom of the Borough is a high honour which should only be awarded in exceptional circumstances where the prospective recipient is an individual or organisation of distinction and has rendered eminent services to the borough.

Candidates should have a strong and continuing connection with and commitment to Merton or have made a major contribution to national life and in doing so have enhanced the reputation of the borough.

Candidates should have made a substantial contribution to the borough in any area of activity, which could include:

- artistic and cultural endeavours
- business, economic growth and prosperity
- charitable work
- improvement to the built and natural environment
- religious and spiritual life
- sports activities
- civic service

The award may be granted posthumously.

3. The award of the Freedom of the Borough requires support of 2/3 of Council. Nominations should therefore first be discussed within your political group and, where appropriate, with other group leaders. In your opinion, is the nomination likely to achieve the required 2/3 support at Council?

YES

NO

4. Please use the box below to outline your nominee's outstanding achievements in the Borough or on the international stage which have brought pride and satisfaction to the Borough. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

5. Nomination submitted by:

Councillor _____ **Date** _____

Please return this form to The Monitoring Officer, Merton Civic Centre or by e-mail to democratic.services@merton.gov.uk

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