

Committee: Standards and General Purposes Committee

Date: 22 July 2021

Subject: Freedom of the Borough – Report of the working group

Lead officer: Louise Round, Monitoring Officer, louise.round@merton.gov.uk

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

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Recommendations:

- A. That the Standards and General Purposes Committee recommends to Council that the award of Freedom of the Borough be made to Richard John Guy for his sporting achievements and continuing work within the community
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. At its meeting on 11 March 2021, the Standards and General Purposes Committee established a small working group to consider nominations for the award of the freedom of the borough and report back.
- 1.2. The working group comprised of Councillors Stephen Alambritis, David Williams, Hina Bokhari and Peter Southgate.
- 1.3. This report sets out the findings and recommendations of the working group.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The working group met once on 29 June 2021 to consider the nomination of Mr Richard (Dickie) John Guy submitted by Councillor Alambritis (appendix A). No other nominations were received.
- 2.2. Members noted that the Freedom of the Borough is an important honour that requires careful thought prior to bestowal. Members also noted the criteria and process for awarding Freedom of the Borough (set out in Appendix 1 of this report), in particular that it 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.
- 2.3. Members agreed that the nomination for Mr Guy met the criteria and demonstrated that he made a substantial contribution to the Borough. The nomination is supported by all Groups on the Council and therefore would meet the 2/3 requirement at Council.
- 2.4. The working group therefore recommended that the nomination should be agreed by the Standards and General Purposes Committee to Council as soon as possible.
- 2.5. Next Steps:

- 2.6. If the Committee accepts the recommendation of the working group in respect of the freedom of the borough nomination of Mr Richard John Guy the next steps are:
- a) To arrange a special meeting under section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Chief Executive has the power to call a meeting for this purpose under Council Procedure Rule 3.1(d);
 - b) That special meeting could either precede the ordinary meeting already scheduled for 15 September or be fixed on a separate day
 - c) If Council accepts the nomination, it it would pass the resolution to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on Mr Richard John Guy. Such a resolution would require the agreement of two thirds of the members of the council present and voting at the meeting
- Council would then be held to award the Freedom of the Borough to Mr Guy.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Committee may reject the recommendations of the working group or may choose different actions to implement the recommendations.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Members of the working group have discussed their recommendations with the political groups.

5 TIMETABLE

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

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Any expenditure associated with conferring the Honorary Freedom of the Borough and the presentation of a framed certification of commendation will be from existing budgets

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Section 249 (paragraphs 5 and 6) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the) the Council of a London Borough may admit a person of distinction or someone who has , in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent services to the borough to be an honorary freeman of the borough.
- 7.2. As stated above, a resolution to confer such status requires a two thirds majority of members present and voting at a special meeting. Having conferred such status, the Council may spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person

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

12.1. None

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