



**Governance and Audit
Committee**

Tuesday 9 March 2021

Subject: Addition to the Civic Honours Scheme - Adoption by the District

Report by:

Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To introduce a process, as part of the Civic Honours Policy, by which the Council may grant Instruments of Adoption.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- (1) That Members approve the summary, criteria, and the Instrument of Adoption process as attached at Appendix 1 for inclusion in the Civic Honours Policy.
- (2) That delegated Authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, to convert the Awarding of a Freedom to the Awarding of an Instrument of Adoption, should the recipient make such a request. A requirement of the delegation being that all Members are notified within 5 days of the decision being made.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The Civic Authority can bestow honours in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act of 1972.

Financial : FIN/154/21/CC

An Adoption Scroll would need to be purchased and would cost circa £200 and could be met within existing revenue budget CV02.

An Adoption would not require any parade and no additional expenditure would be incurred.

Staffing :

All activities associated with the awarding of honours can be met from existing Resources.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Data Protection Implications :

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations :

Health Implications:

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Policy concerning the acceptance of a "freedom" or similar honour conferred by a civic authority in the United Kingdom on a Royal Air Force establishment or unit" – available from the Civic Office.

Risk Assessment :

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1 Background

1.1 Members will be aware that Council has a Policy under which Civic Honours can be granted.

1.2 Under the current Policy the Council has processes by which it can bestow the following Honours: -

- * Honorary Alderman
- * Honorary Freeman
- * Honorary Freedom of Entry to the District

1.3 By way of an Extraordinary meeting on 4 November 2019 Council received a report which sought Members' consideration of awarding a Freedom of the District. It was:

RESOLVED that the Freedom of the District be awarded to the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team (the Red Arrows).

1.4 The Civic Team wrote to the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team (RAFAT) to advise of the decision and on 13 December 2019 received communication back.

1.5 The nature of this correspondence was reported back to Full Council by way of exempt report in January 2020.

1.6 At that meeting it was **RESOLVED** that

- (a) the awarding of an adoption be approved in principle;
- (b) delegated authority be granted to the Governance and Audit Committee to introduce a process by which "adoptions" can be granted going forward as part of the Civic Honours Policy; and
- (c) subject to (b) above being completed, the recipient be invited to Annual Council in May 2019 to receive their "adoption".

1.7 At that meeting Members were also keen to further understand the differences between a Freedom and Adoption and rationale for RAFAT's decision.

1.8 This report seeks to introduce the process by which "adoptions" can be granted going forward as part of the Civic Honours Policy.

1.9 The report also briefly sets out the differences between the two honours; and summarises the "policy concerning the acceptance of a 'freedom' or similar honour conferred by a civic authority in the United Kingdom on a Royal Air Force establishment or unit" provided by the Squadron Leader Barry Matthews of the Ceremonial Office. Both of these have been taken into consideration in preparing the proposed adoption process and informed RAFAT's decision.

2. What is an adoption and how does it differ?

2.1 The presentation of an “Illuminated Address”, a simple “Resolution”, or an **“Instrument of Adoption”** can be presented by a civic authority where:

- a. The civic authority is of a lesser status than a borough or equivalent and therefore does not have the power to confer a “Freedom”.
- b. Importantly, the unit or establishment would not be able to fulfil the obligations associated with exercising a “Freedom”, due either to being of insufficient size or to its impending disbandment.

2.2 The Policy referred to in 1.9 provided to the Civic Office states

“Individual squadrons or units on a station should not normally accept a Freedom as they are liable to redeployment. This does not apply to units of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force which, provided they meet with the other criteria laid out (in the policy), may accept the granting of Freedoms from civic authorities within their area of recruitment. A “Freedom” cannot be granted or accepted on behalf of the Royal Air Force as a whole, though an Illuminated Address or Resolution can potentially be accepted on behalf of the Service.”

2.3 The policy goes on to state: -

“All applications for Honours are considered by the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, who will make the final determination after consulting with Royal Air Force Ceremonial.”

2.4 The presentation of an “Illuminated Address”, a “Resolution” or an “Instrument of Adoption” is normally to be regarded as being the equivalent of a “Freedom”, but the policy regarding acceptance may be more flexibly applied as there will not be the same requirement incumbent on a unit or establishment periodically to exercise a “Freedom”.

2.5 In considering whether to accept a “Freedom” the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, after consulting with Royal Air Force Ceremonial will give consideration to:

- a. The historic connection between the unit or establishment and the civic authority.
- b. The size of the unit or establishment and its capacity to exercise a “Freedom” unaided.
- c. The likely continued existence of the unit or establishment for the foreseeable future.

- d. The number of “Freedoms” already granted to the unit or establishment.
- e. Criteria (b) and (c) above will be of lesser import in considering Illuminated Addresses, Adoptions etc.

3. Proposed Process by Which an Instrument of Adoption will be Considered by the Council

- 3.1 Given the information set out in Section 2 and RAFAT’s position as previously reported to Council, it is proposed that the same process be used, for considering Instrument of Adoptions, to that used when Granting Freedoms.
- 3.2 It is suggested that the Council should always, in the first instance, seek to award a Freedom but that this Honour should be amended without formal reference back to Full Council should the recipient determine under their adopted policies they unable to accept a Freedom. As such Council are requested to grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Council to convert the ‘Awarding of a Freedom’ to the ‘Awarding of an Instrument of Adoption’, should the recipient make such a request. All Members would be notified of the decision in writing within 5 days of it being made and like a Freedom the recipient would still attend a Full Council meeting to receive the award.
- 3.3 Attached at Appendix 1 is the Summary and Criteria relating to an “Instrument of Adoption” and a process by which adoptions will be considered by the Council.
- 3.4 As previously stated this is fundamentally the same process used for Granting Freedoms. Like a Freedom the recipient would still attend a Full Council meeting to receive the award, the only exception being that the parade element would be at the discretion of the recipient.