

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Council – 12 January 2022

Report Title

Proposal to Create an Honorary Freeman of the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Sharon Kemp, Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Emma Hill , Acting Head of Democratic Services

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

Under the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to grant the title of Honorary Freewoman and Honorary Freeman of the Borough to persons of distinction who have rendered eminent service to the Borough.

The Council is asked to consider a proposal endorsed by the Mayor and the Political Group Leaders, in accordance with the authority's protocol in respect of the award of the freedom of the borough, to create a new Honorary Freeman.

Recommendations

1. That in pursuance of the provisions of Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in recognition of his outstanding service to sport as an Olympic Gold Medalist Paralympian and inspiration to others facing adversity through life changing events, Gavin Walker, be admitted as an Honorary Freeman of this Borough at Annual Council.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

Protocol for the Award of the Freedom of the Borough of Rotherham

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Proposal to Create an Honorary Freeman of the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham

1. Background

- 1.1 The origin of the Freedom of the Borough goes back to early medieval times, when with the growth of the great English towns, there emerged a class of citizen known as Freemen, who enjoyed important privileges in the government of their own and in the matter of corporate property, as against strangers and the rest of the inhabitants.
- 1.2 With the passing of the Honorary Freedom of the Boroughs Act 1885 the dignity attached to the Office of Freeman was revived and enhanced. This act conferred upon all Municipal corporations the power to admit as Honorary Freeman of the Borough “persons of distinction and any persons who have rendered eminent services to the Borough”. This can only be achieved by the Council voting at a specially called meeting.
- 1.3 The Freedom of the Borough is the highest Civic Award the Council can bestow.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 In 2018, the Council approved a protocol detailing the decision-making process for making the award of the Freedom of the Borough. A nomination for the award must be received and supported by at least ten Members of the Council prior to it being considered by the Mayor and Political Group Leaders, who will determine whether to recommend the award to the Council.
- 2.2 A nomination to admit Gavin Walker as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Rotherham was submitted by Councillor Alan Atkin, with the support of ten other councillors. The nomination set out the various outstanding achievements of Gavin Walker on behalf of the borough.
- 2.3 In accordance with the protocol, the Chief Executive arranged for the Mayor and political group leaders to review the nomination.
- 2.4 Following consideration of the nomination by Councillors Read, Barley, Carter and Elliott, as political group leaders, this report has been prepared recommending the award to Gavin Walker.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 It is recommended that, in pursuance of the provisions of Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in recognition of his outstanding commitment as a Paralympic Gold Medallist and inspiration to others to achieve against life changing events, Gavin Walker be admitted as an Honorary Freeman of this Borough at the Annual Council Meeting.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The protocol detailing the decision-making process for the award of the Freedom of the Borough sets out how the Chief Executive should consult the Mayor and Political Group Leaders prior to any recommendation being submitted to Council. This process has been followed in enabling this report to be presented to the Council.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Subject to the Council approving the recommendation to make the award of Freeman of the Borough, at the Annual Council Meeting, following consultation with the Mayor, to pass the formal resolution.
- 5.2 The Head of Democratic Services will be accountable for the implementation of the Council's decision and for establishing arrangements for the award of the Freeman of the Borough.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

- 6.1 Section 249(9) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a relevant authority to spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person on whom the authority has conferred the title of Honorary Freewoman or Freeman under subsection (5).
- 6.2 Freedom Scrolls currently cost £855.50 each and it costs approximately £100 to have them framed. These costs can be met from the budget.
- 6.3 It is proposed to hold a small Civic Reception will be held following the Annual Council Meeting, as recommended under the Freedom of the Borough protocol. The costs will be met through the budget for the Civic Office.

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

- 7.1 In accordance with Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specifically convened with notice of the purpose, admit Honorary Freewomen and Honorary Freemen of the place or area for which it is the authority persons/organisations of distinction and persons/organisations who have in its opinion rendered eminent services to the Borough.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no implications for children and young people, or vulnerable adults associated with this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 There are no equalities or human rights implications associated with this report.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no Climate change implications associated with this report.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 There are no implications for partners arising from this report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 There are no risks directly associated with this report.

Accountable Officer(s)

Emma Hill, Acting Head of Democratic Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive		Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Philip Horsfield	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Human Resources (if appropriate)	N/A	Click here to enter a date.
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	N/A	Click here to enter a date.

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