

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Council – 03 June 2020

**Report Title**

Proposal to Create an Honorary Freewoman 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)**

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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 Freewoman.

**Recommendations**

1. That in pursuance of the provisions of Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in recognition of her outstanding service as a major employer in the borough, services to industry and charitable works within Rotherham and South Yorkshire, Dame Julie Ann Kenny CBE DL HonD FRSA be admitted as an Honorary Freewoman of this Borough at an extraordinary Council meeting.
2. That the authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor, to determine the date of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council to admit Dame Julie Kenny as an Honorary Freewoman of the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham.

**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**

No

**Council Approval Required**

Yes

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

# **Proposal to Create an Honorary Freewoman 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 Dame Julie Ann Kenny CBE DL HonD FRSA as a Honorary Freewoman of the Borough of Rotherham was submitted by the Mayor of Rotherham, Councillor Jenny Andrews, with the support of ten other councillors. The nomination set out the various outstanding works and achievements of Dame Julie on behalf of the borough and South Yorkshire.
- 2.3 In accordance with the protocol, the Chief Executive arranged for the Mayor and political group leaders to review the nomination, however the Mayor declared an interest in the matter having made the nomination and took no part in determining whether the nomination should proceed to Council.
- 2.4 Following consideration of the nomination by Councillors Cowles and Read, as political group leaders, this report has been prepared recommending the award to Dame Julie Kenny.

## **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 her outstanding service as a major employer in the borough, services to industry and charitable works within Rotherham and South Yorkshire, Dame Julie Ann Kenny CBE DL HonD FRSA be admitted as an Honorary Freewoman of this Borough at an extraordinary 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 Freedom of the Borough, an extraordinary Council meeting will be arranged, following consultation with the Mayor, to pass the formal resolution when it is hoped that Members and the public will be physically present at meetings.
- 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 Freedom of the Borough.

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 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 Extraordinary Meeting of the Council, 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**

- 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 for the purpose with notice of the purpose, admit to be 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 Partners**

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

## **12. Risks and Mitigation**

12.1 There are no risks directly associated with this report.

## **13. Accountable Officer(s)**

James McLaughlin, Head of Democratic Services

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