

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy

FREEMAN AND ALDERMAN CEREMONY1. Purpose of Report

To consider holding a Freeman and Alderman ceremony in 2023/24 and providing the necessary budget for the associated costs.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the official admittance to the office of Honorary Freeman/Alderman of the Borough take place at a special meeting of the Council to be held on 24 January 2024 be approved.

The total cost of £13,200 would be partially met from existing budgets with the additional budget of £6,200 required for this purpose to be funded from the General Fund Revenue Contingency in 2023/24.

3. Detail

170 (Infrastructure Support) Engineer Group were given the status of Freeman of the Borough in 2009. Since then, they have exercised their freedom by holding regular Freedom Parades in the Borough's four towns. The regiment has recently been reorganised as the 'Royal Engineer Group' and the Freeman status will need to be ceremonially awarded under the new title to enable Freedom of Entry Parades to continue.

As a ceremony will be required, it is an opportunity to open nominations to other individuals who may be deserving of the title of Freeman or Alderman so that they may also be duly recognised for their contribution to the community, subject to the usual selection processes.

It is also intended that the Council makes use of the relevant legislation to include the titles of both Freeman/Alderman and Freewoman/Alderwoman.

In order for appropriate preparations to take place, it is proposed that this ceremony take place in January 2024 and follow the same format as that of the 2022 ceremony. The estimated costs are shown in the appendix. As no Freedom Parade is planned for 2023/24, £7,000 is available from the existing ceremonial events budget to support the cost of the event, with a further £6,200 of additional funding required.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

The estimated total cost of the Freeman and Aldermen ceremony is £13,200. Whilst up to £7,000 of funding is available from the existing Ceremonial Events budget to support the cost of this event, a further £6,200 of additional funding would be required for which there is currently no budgetary provision. If Members are minded to support the full proposal, a supplementary one-off revenue development of £6,200 in 2023/24 would have to be funded from the General Fund Revenue Contingency budget of which £13,000 remains available.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

If the new regiment at the barracks is a successor of this previous regiment and the previous Freedom of Entry included successors, then nothing further would be required to formalise this. Otherwise, it would be the case that the Council would be required to grant the Freedom of Entry on the new regiment at Chetwynd Barracks following the usual process.

The relevant legislation for the admission of honorary freemen or honorary freewomen is contained in the Local Government Act 1972 which was amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 to include 'honorary freewomen' into the scope of the legislation where previously it was only freemen. The express titles are used in the legislation and therefore the title 'freeperson' would not fall within the scope of the honorary titles which can be bestowed under the legislation.

6. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

No comments

7. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

No comments

8. Climate Change Implications

The comments from the Waste and Climate Change Manager were as follows:

No comments

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any [OFFICIAL (SENSITIVE)] information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

Not required

11. Background Papers

Nil

APPENDIXFinancial Implications

The table below shows an estimated cost of £13,200 to hold the ceremony, which would be similar to the arrangements made for the November 2022 event.

Several venues have been considered in relation to availability, facilities and capacity. Members were minded to pick a specific venue, the costs of which are shown below.

The costs indicated are for the admittance of five Freemen and/or Aldermen. There would be a further cost of £615.00 for each additional Freeman or Alderman admitted.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Estimated costs</u>
Silver Badges of Office (x5)	£2,375
Print and Photography	£250
Certificates and Scrolls	£200
Honours Board Updates	£500
Venue hire and hospitality	£7,040
Live streaming	£2,835
Total	£13,200