

North Tyneside Council Report to Council Date: 18 May 2017

ITEM 13
Freedom of the Borough

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): N Redfearn

Report from Service Area: Law and Governance

Responsible Officer: Vivienne Geary, Head of Law and Governance
Tel: (0191) 643 5339

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

This report informs the full Council of a nomination received for Freedom of the Borough and invites the Council to consider this nomination.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

The Council is recommended to consider the nomination set out in the report for the award of the Freedom of the Borough.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 10 April 2017.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report has no direct relevance to the Our North Tyneside Plan priorities.

1.5 Information:

Background

1.5.1 The eligibility criteria for nominations are as follows:

Nominees for the award of Freedom of the Borough of North Tyneside must be persons/organisations of distinction who, in the opinion of the Council, have rendered eminent service to the borough and have either:

- (a) lived in the borough; or
- (b) worked or been based in the borough; or
- (c) been born in the borough

The nominee for Freedom of the Borough can be an individual or an organisation. Serving councillors, serving members of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, the Elected Mayor or serving council employees will not be considered.

Nominations can only be made through Councillors or the Elected Mayor of North Tyneside Council.

- 1.5.2 At the Council meeting held on 26 September 2013, responsibility for the assessment of nominations for the award of the Freedom of the Borough was transferred from the Standards Committee to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee.
- 1.5.3 The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy and Development Committee may recommend a maximum of two nominations to the Annual Council meeting for final consideration.
- 1.5.4 On 3 April 2017, the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee received a report which outlined the process for the award of the Freedom of the Borough and gave details of the eligible nomination submitted.
- 1.5.5 The Committee agreed to recommend the following nomination for consideration by the Council:

Ms Sarah Hunter MBE.

Nominated by Councillor Ian Grayson and seconded by Councillor Frank Lott.
Supported by Councillors P Oliver, J Cassidy, P Earley and G Bell

'We would like to nominate Sarah Hunter for the Freedom of the Borough award as she has become the world's best women's rugby player in 2016. This is the highest honour in women's rugby worldwide.

Sarah was born in North Shields and attended Goathland Primary and Longbenton High Schools.

She began her rugby career at Goathland Primary School at the age of 9 in 1994 when she did a rugby lesson and has not stopped playing since. She joined a local club where she had to start by playing against boys as not many girls played then.

Sarah coached wheel chair rugby at Percy Hedley School and continues to support young people, players and non-players in local schools and elsewhere.

Sarah made her England debut in 2007 and has been a stalwart in the England team ever since playing 85 times (at the time of writing this), the 5th most capped England women's player of all time. She has also scored 18 tries for England. Sarah is the current England captain and she was also vice-captain of the England squad that won the world cup in 2014 and that was later also named BBC Sports Personality Team of the Year 2014. Sarah was awarded an MBE for services to rugby.

In 2016 Sarah was named women's world rugby player [of the year].

Sarah would be an excellent person to receive the Freedom of the Borough as she is an inspiration to all young people in North Tyneside particularly girls showing what can be achieved by hard work and dedication. She has succeeded in a sport that was, when she started, deemed to be a male sport. In fact Sarah has played a part in changing views, opinions and perceptions of women's rugby.

The Women's England rugby team are the pride of English rugby, world champions and has the England captain Sarah Hunter as women's world rugby player 2016'.

- 1.5.6 The Authority's Constitution requires any nominations received for Freedom of the Borough to be included with the business for the Annual Council Meeting.

The full Council is asked to consider the above nomination taking into account the provisions of section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits the Council to admit to be honorary freemen persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough. Any decision to admit the nominee must be approved by not less than two thirds of Members voting thereon at the Council meeting.

1.6 Decision options:

The Council can agree to award or not to award the Freedom of the Borough to the nominee.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

The recommendation is procedural and a recognised part of the business of the Annual Council meeting.

1.8 Appendices:

None.

1.9 Contact officers:

Dave Brown, Law and Governance (0191) 643 5358
Alison Campbell, Finance (0191) 643 7038

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information has been used in the compilation of this report and available at the office of the author:

The Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
Report to and Minutes of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee – 3 April 2017.
Nomination Form.

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There is estimated expenditure in the region of £1,000 if an award was to be made. Costs include catering, ceremony programme, handmade scroll and photographer. This expenditure would be met from existing budgets in Law and Governance.

2.2 Legal

The Council is authorised to award Freedom of the Borough by virtue of section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

There is little scope for the award of Freedom of the Borough to be driven by the views of external consultees. The Member approval process, as set out in section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, therefore provides the key element to the consultation process.

2.4 Human rights

The proposals within this report do not themselves have direct implications in respect of the Human Rights Act 1998.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no direct equalities or diversity implications arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

As the recommendation is procedural and a recognised part of the business of the Annual Council meeting, no further risk assessment has been undertaken.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no direct environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Deputy Chief Executive X
- Head of Service X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X
- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Head of Corporate Strategy X