

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	16 December 2003
Subject:	Proposed Conferment of Honorary Freedom of the London Borough of Harrow (Section 249: Local Government Act 1972)
Key decision:	No
Responsible Chief Officer:	Chief Executive
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Strategy and External Affairs
Status:	Part I (public)
Ward:	All
Enclosures:	None

1. Summary

- 1.1 To mark the fiftieth anniversary in 2004 of Harrow Urban District receiving its Charter of Incorporation as a Borough (4 May 1954), it is proposed to confer the honour of Freedom of the Borough on persons of distinction who have rendered eminent services and are connected to the London Borough of Harrow.
- 1.2 The power to award the honour of Freedom of the Borough is contained in Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972. To invoke the provisions of Section 249 it is required that a Special Meeting of the full Council be convened for the purpose.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Council be requested to invoke the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer the honour of Freedom of the Borough of Harrow on persons to be notified in the Council Summons, to mark the fiftieth anniversary in 2004 of the Borough's incorporation;**
- 2.2 **that further to 2.1 the Mayor be invited to call a Special Meeting of the Council for this purpose, as required by Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, which it is proposed be held at 7.30 p.m., on Thursday 22 January 2004, prior to the scheduled Council Meeting on that date;**
- 2.3 **subject to 2.1 above, the granting of the Freedom be recorded in an illuminated Scroll and presented to the recipient(s) in an appropriate Casket, and the commissioning and associated costs be as now approved at this meeting, further to the provisions of Section 249(6) of the Local Government Act 1972.**

REASON

To enhance the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Borough's incorporation with a formal civic honour of appropriate status.

3. Consultation with Ward Councillors

3.1 Not applicable.

4. Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)

4.1 Harrow Urban District received its Charter of Incorporation as a Borough on 4 May 1954 and accordingly 2004 marks the fiftieth anniversary year of the event.

4.2 In the following year to the Incorporation, the new Borough conferred upon the late Sir Winston Churchill the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Harrow. The Honorary Freedom was also conferred on the following individuals (William Allen, A. E. Amor, Charles Jordan and Francis Telfer in 1968) (George Gange and Horace Cutler in 1977).

4.3 The singular honour of Freedom of the Borough has been invoked over the intervening years to celebrate milestones achieved by local organisations. In 1983 a number of locally based Territorial Army units were honoured. The honour was awarded to RAF Stations Stanmore Park and Bentley Priory in October 1988 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Stanmore Park Station and in recognition of the imminent fiftieth anniversary of the roles played by both Stations in the Battle of Britain in 1940. The Christ Church, Roxeth and Harrow Company of the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade was honoured in October 1994 with Freedom of the Borough to mark the Company's one hundredth anniversary of continuous service in Harrow. In October 1996 The Royal British Legion Harrow Branch was awarded the honour in recognition of its seventy fifth anniversary.

4.4 Accordingly, it is proposed that as part of the Council's formal celebrations in 2004 of its fiftieth anniversary of Incorporation consideration be given to marking the occasion by conferring the Honorary Freedom of the Borough.

5. Relevance to Corporate Priorities

The proposed celebration of the fiftieth anniversary through 2004 of the Borough's Charter of Incorporation, of which the conferment of Honorary Freedom will be a signal element, will contribute to the strengthening of Harrow's local communities raise aspirations to succeed and reflect achievements.

6. Section 249: Local Government Act 1972

6.1 Section 249 (5) of the Act states:-

"The Council of a London Borough..... may, by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object admit to be honorary freemen of the city borough persons of distinction who have in the opinion of the Council rendered eminent services to the city borough....."

6.2 Section 249 (6) of the Act states:-

"The Council of a London Borough..... may spend such reasonable sum as they think fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to

a person upon whom they have conferred the title to be an honorary freeman of the city borough.”

7. Proposed Recipient(s) of the Honorary Freedom

7.1 In anticipation that the Council would consider the proposal to confer honorary Freedom of the Borough appropriate to the fiftieth anniversary of Incorporation, the matter has been the subject of prior consultation with the leaderships of the political groups represented on the Authority.

7.2 Further to that consultation approaches have been made informally to persons of distinction with connections to the Borough and confirmation of the proposed recipients will be notified in a Special Council Summons.

8. Arrangements for a Freedom Scroll

8.1 Arrangements are currently in process.

9. Procedure

9.1 It will be noted as a requirement of Section 249 (5) that if the Authority is to proceed with the conferment of the honorary Freedom of the Borough a special meeting of the Council must be convened for the purpose.

9.2 On those previous occasions when the Authority has formally conferred honorary titles, the special meeting has been held immediately prior to an already arranged meeting of the Council. The special meeting may only have the single issue of the proposed admission of honorary freemen on the Summons and would therefore be anticipated to be of short duration. A formal vote on the object of conferring the honour must be recorded. The resolution must be passed by not less than two thirds of the Members of Council present and voting.

9.3 Arising from this proposed arrangement, the opportunity to convene a special meeting would next arise on 22 January 2004. There would be advantage in the choice of January, given that the Council Tax and Budget will be determined at the February meeting and deferring until April would not provide certainty until late in the year and would impinge on administrative preparations. It is presumed that a formal ceremony to confer the honour of Freedom of the Borough would be held in May 2004 and this is proposed to be in the context of an appropriate event within the fiftieth anniversary programme.

10. Consultation

10.1 None required.

11. Finance Observations

11.1 Can be met from within existing budgets.

12. Legal Observations

12.1 None.

13. Conclusions

13.1 Cabinet is invited to consider the proposals that:-

13.1.1 the fiftieth anniversary in 2004 of the Incorporation of Harrow as a Borough be marked by the conferment of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough under the provisions of Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, and the Council be recommended accordingly;

13.1.2 the special meeting of the Council to be held for this purpose, be on 22 January 2004 and so commended to the Mayor;

13.1.3 the commissioning of a Freedom Scroll and Casket for presentation to recipients, with associated costs, be now approved.

FOR DECISION

Joyce Markham
Chief Executive