


Freedom of the Borough Panel 7 March 2018	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Freedom of the Borough Award Ceremony	

Lead Officer	Asmat Hussain, Director of Law & Governance
Contact Officers	Rushena Miah-Committee Officer, Matthew Mannion- Head of Committee Services
Executive Key Decision?	No

Executive Summary

The Freedom of the Borough Panel agreed that the Freedom of the Borough would be awarded in 2018 and agreed the process and criteria for selection.

This report will detail the arrangements for an awards ceremony and reception.

Recommendations:

The Freedom of the Borough Panel is recommended to:

1. To note the report.
2. To make a decision on which date to hold the Freedom of the Borough Award Ceremony.
3. To agree on event arrangements or advise on alternative arrangements.
4. To note the estimated budget for the event.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

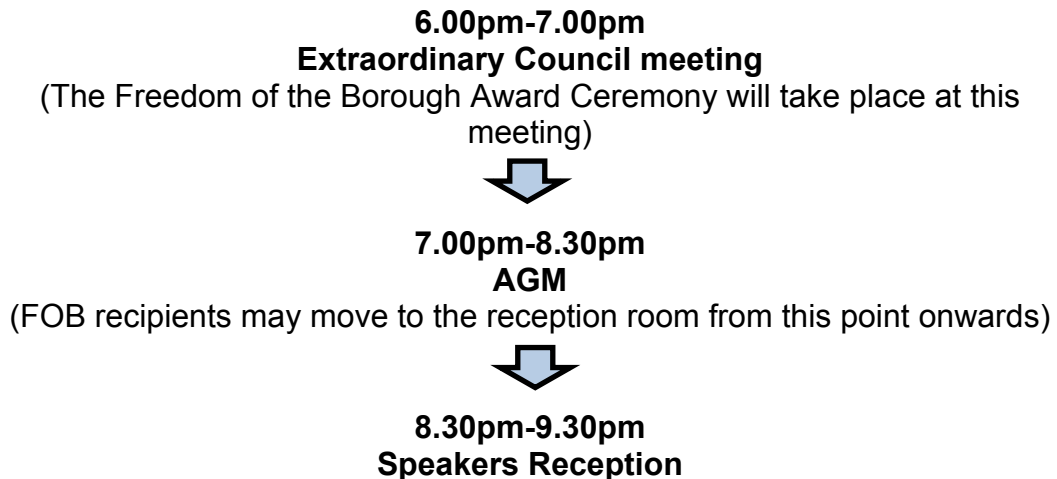
- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Freedom of the Borough Panel, it was agreed that an award ceremony should take place. It was agreed that a report would be prepared for discussion at the next meeting on the planning of the event itself. This report will therefore allow the panel to provide input into the planning of the Freedom of the Borough award ceremony.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Panel could decide on an alternative event procedure than the ones being proposed.
- 2.2 The Panel could decide to award the Freedom of the Borough without holding a reception event.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The process to award the Freedom of the Borough is as follows:
- Nominations were sought and eleven nominations were received with one person being nominated seven times.
 - Nominations are to be considered by the Panel.
 - If the Panel considers a nomination to be of sufficient merit, the nomination will be forwarded to an extraordinary Council meeting for decision.
- 3.2 This report presents how the nominations will be determined by Council and the nature of the ceremony.
- 3.3 **When to hold the event:**
At the last meeting of the Panel, it was proposed that the award be presented at an Extraordinary Council meeting on the 23 May 2018 to take place directly before the AGM. This will allow the current Speaker to present the awards.
- 3.4.1 **Option 1:** The first option is to hold the Freedom of the Borough Award on the 23 May 2018 as previously suggested and invite the Freedom of the Borough recipients as guests to the Speakers reception. This is the recommended option due to convenience and shared event costs.



3.4.2 The following should however be noted:

- The start time of the Extraordinary Meeting will need to be **6:00pm** to allow time to complete all Council business before 9pm to allow time for the reception after the AGM.
- Combining the reception with the annual Speaker's reception will limit the number of guests who are able to attend (due to space limitations at the Town Hall).

3.4.3 **Option 2:** Alternatively, Members could award the Freedom of the Borough at an Extraordinary Council meeting prior to the Ordinary July 2018 Council meeting and host a small reception afterwards. The Ordinary Council meeting would have to be shortened, with full agreement of the Party Groups to accommodate the award ceremony and reception.

3.4.4 In relation to this option it is worth noting:

- As the event is separate to the Speaker's reception it would have a better focus and more guests could be invited.
- The additional cost of providing a second evening (with the Speaker's event happening at the AGM)
- The Ordinary Council meeting would have to be shortened (likely to exclude Member Questions and Motions) to ensure there was time to have a reception event.
- The likelihood there will be a new Speaker

3.5 **Award Ceremony Procedure:**

If option one is chosen, the award ceremony will take place at the Extraordinary Council meeting before the start of the formal Council AGM and will be chaired by the Speaker.

3.5.1 It is proposed that the Speaker introduces the item and the first nominee.

3.5.2 A vote will take place to determine if the nominee has been successful.

- 3.5.3 The first winner will be awarded with a scroll and flowers. The winner will be photographed accepting the award. They will be given up to 5 minutes to give a speech if they wish.
- 3.5.4 The Speaker will then introduce the second nominee and a vote will take place to determine if the nominee has been successful.
- 3.5.5 The second winner will be awarded with a scroll and flowers. The winner will be photographed accepting the award. They will have up to 5 minutes to give a speech if they wish.
- 3.6 The Speaker will close the meeting and invite Members and guests to the Speaker's reception to celebrate the newly appointed Speaker and those awarded with the Freedom of the Borough.
- 3.7 **Timing:** the Freedom of the Borough item is scheduled to last approximately **35 minutes** as shown in the next table. Panel Members should consider whether the amount of time indicated is sufficient or whether further segments should be included such as the opportunity for Members to comment on the nominations.

3.8 Running Order

Order	Time
Speaker introduces the Freedom of Borough item	5 minutes
Speaker introduces the first nominee	5 minutes
A vote takes place	5 minutes
The winner is photographed accepting the award and makes a speech	5 minutes
Speaker introduces the second nominee	5 minutes
A vote takes place	5 minutes
Winner is photographed accepting the award and makes a speech	5 minutes
Total Time	35 minutes
Speaker will close the meeting and invite Members and Guests to the Speakers reception scheduled for later that evening.	Unknown

3.9 Proposed budget for the award ceremony

Item	Estimated Cost (£)
Inscribed award scroll (2-8 week turn around, scroll takes 2 weeks to print and leather binding takes 8 weeks to prepare). Costs are based on best value in line with the Council's purchasing policy.	Scroll- 200 plus VAT Leather holder 350 plus VAT Total per scroll = 660 X 2 = 1320
Flowers x 2	60
Costs towards apportion of the Speakers reception refreshments costs for up to 30 people (10 guests per nominee plus panel).	300 – hot food buffet, dessert, fruit, drinks
Total	£1680

3.10 Post event

A representative from the Communications team will be invited to the Award Ceremony to ensure the event can be publicised appropriately.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Section 249(4A) of the 1972 Act empowers the Council to '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 of honorary alderman or admitted to be an honorary freeman of the [borough].'

4.2 Traditionally the Council has presented a sealed and illuminated certificate of the grant of the Honorary Freedom, incorporating a copy of the formal

resolution and contained in a suitable casket; and has in all previous cases held a reception in honour of the recipient(s).

- 4.3 The total cost of the presentation and reception is estimated to be in the region of £5,000-£6,000 and will be funded from the existing Democratic Services budget.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1. Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 permits the Council to admit persons to be honorary freemen or honorary freewomen of Tower Hamlets. The only requirements for persons so admitted is that they be persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to Tower Hamlets.
- 5.2. The decision to admit must be by resolution of the Council at a specially convened meeting for that purpose and must be passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting at that meeting.
- 5.3. As there is no specific guidance for admitting Honorary Freeman and Freewomen, the Council can set up its own process for inviting nominations and for their consideration prior to the matter going to an Extraordinary Council meeting to consider resolutions to admit. Council has established a Freedom of the Borough Panel to *consider proposals that may be made in due course relating to the granting of the Freedom of the Borough, including any nominations for that award, and to make recommendations*. This Panel can therefore determine the process for inviting nominations and for their consideration.
- 5.4. In consideration this Report and its recommendations, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (the public sector equality duty). There is some information in the report relevant to these considerations in paragraph 6 below.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1. It is important that the award of the Freedom of the Borough should reflect the exceptional contribution of the resident(s) to the benefit of all sections of the community within the Borough.

7. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 None specific to this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None specific to this report.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None specific to this report.

10. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

10.1 None specific to this report.

Appendices and Background Documents

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Scroll supplier information.

Background Documents

- None.