


<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>Ad-Hoc Freedom of the Borough Panel</b></p> <p>Thursday, 27 May 2021</p>	
<p><b>Report of:</b> Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p><b>Freedom of the Borough nomination process and nomination form including venue and award proposals</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services Patricia Attawia, Democratic Services Team Leader (Civic and Members)
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

### Executive Summary

The Freedom of the Borough Ad-Hoc Panel was established on 15 April 2021, with six additional non-voting members being co-opted in accordance with the Terms of Reference. The proposal to adopt a further co-opted member is included in the report.

Following discussions at the first meeting, this report sets out options for the nomination process and nomination form for Members of the Panel to consider.

The report also sets out, for initial discussion, information on venues and types of award that can be presented, including costs.

### Recommendations:

The Freedom of the Borough Ad-Hoc Panel is recommended:

1. To consider the proposed appointment of the Deputy Lieutenant, Mr Leslie Morgan OBE DL as an additional non-voting co-opted Member of the Panel.
2. To consider the nomination process and form and agree the final arrangements
3. To review and discuss the information presented in relation to potential venues and awards.

### 1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

This report is presented to enable Panel Members to be aware of the options available and to agree the proposed arrangements for the nomination process and form.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

The Panel is free to propose alternative arrangements to the nomination process and form, and to request further information on potential venues and awards.

## **3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

3.1 The report to the Panel meeting on 15 April 2021 set out the background to the Freedom of the Borough Award. It included the Terms of Reference, Membership and Quorum of the Panel to be noted and advised on co-opting additional non-voting members.

### **Co-optee**

3.2 In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the panel co-opted six additional non-voting members at their first meeting on 15 April 2021. They also requested that the Deputy Lieutenant for Tower Hamlets, Mr Leslie Morgan OBE DL be proposed as an additional co-optee subject to his agreement. He was approached and has agreed to be a co-opted Member of this Panel and so this report is recommending his appointment. The Panel may also propose further nominations should it so wish.

### **Nomination form and process**

3.3 The report to the Panel meeting on 15 April 2021 set out options for the nomination process and nomination form. Following the Panel's comments revised options have been set out below for review.

### **Timetable**

3.4 The Panel considered it important that the process be given enough time for comprehensive publicity and access for all areas of the community to have an opportunity to nominate. It was emphasised that the process not be rushed. On this basis a reviewed timeline could work as follows:

- Meeting to confirm nomination process and nomination form wording – May
- Period for receipt of nominations June/July/August
- Meeting to consider nominations early September
- Special meeting of Council to confirm nominations October or November

The Panel are asked to consider and comment on the above as necessary.

### **Publicity**

3.5 At the first meeting the Panel discussed the need for wide ranging publicity in a variety of formats, ensuring an open and inclusive process.

3.6 It is proposed that a webpage is created with information and guidance on nominating as well as a link to an electronic nomination form. This will be

promoted through council communication channels (including social media) and partners will be encouraged to promote it as well.

- 3.7 In addition, planning is underway for an article to appear in the June edition of Our East End with details on where to find the link or obtain a hard copy of the form if required. The draft article is attached at Appendix 1 for the panel to review and comment.
- 3.8 The prestigious nature of the award will be emphasised across all publicity and in the guidance notes to help attract appropriate nominations.
- 3.9 The Panel previously discussed signposting to other awards such as Civic Awards or the Government's Covid awards.
- 3.10 It is proposed that information about making Civic Award nominations is mentioned in the Freedom of the Borough process, to provide an alternative option.
- 3.11 Whilst Civic Award nominations will be accepted alongside Freedom of the Borough nominations, it will be emphasised that the process for those awards will not begin until after the Freedom of the Borough has been completed in the Autumn, with the Civic Award ceremony in the Spring of 2022.
- 3.12 Full advertising for the Civic Awards will begin after nominations for the Freedom of the Borough have closed. Officers in Strategic Policy and Partnership will be assisting to ensure nominations are spread widely across the community.

#### Nomination Form

- 3.13 Following the request from the Panel for more time to consider the nomination form and accompanying guidance, the draft nomination form and guidance are attached at Appendix 2, for further discussion.

#### Venue

- 3.14 The Panel discussed the importance of making the award ceremony a very special occasion to celebrate the exceptional nature of the achievement. Hosting the event in an outside venue such as York Hall was considered.
- 3.15 Officers have approached the management of York Hall and the East Wintergarden in Canary Wharf for costs involved in using these venues, for the Panel to consider.
- York Hall – hire rate for Mon-Wed is £3600 and for Thu-Sun is £4000. There is no discount available. Further potential costs include skylight blackout £500 + VAT, car park £600 + VAT and ceiling lighting rig (2m square in the middle of the hall) £300 + VAT
  - Canary Wharf – East Wintergarden: hire rate for 8am-5pm is £6500+VAT, and for 12pm-12am is £9500+VAT.

- Canary Wharf – Level 39 from £800 - £3000 + VAT for evening hire, depending on the room and numbers. However, these rooms would require names to be given to the venue well in advance so would perhaps be less accessible to the public.
- 3.16 Alternative options that would be free of charge or potentially incur lower costs would be to use Council venues:
- Mulberry Place – no charge
  - The Brady Centre – Main & side hall together, £117/hour after 5.00pm
  - The Ecology Pavilion – Half day hire (8hrs) Mon – Thu £1250, Fri-Sun £1500. Full day hire Mon-Thu £2500, Fri-Sun £3000
  - The Arts Pavilion – Half day hire (8hrs) Mon-Thu £1500. No half day hire available for Fri-Sun. Full day hire Mon-Thu £3000, Fri-Sun £3700
- 3.17 Any additional requirements such as technical equipment, PA systems etc. In the above venues, including some of the council ones would be provided at an extra cost.

### **Scrolls**

- 3.17 At the Freedom of the Borough Ceremony in 2018 the recipient was presented with a framed computer-generated scroll at a cost of £220+ VAT. An updated quotation for the same scroll and frame has been received for £218.00 + VAT.

Other options can be seen at appendix 3 for the panel to consider.

## **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 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.

## **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
  - Consultations,
  - Environmental (including air quality),
  - Risk Management,
  - Crime Reduction,
  - Safeguarding.
  - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 None specific to this report.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

6.1 The cost of any of the proposals agreed in this report will be contained within existing budgets.

## **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

7.3 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 the Freedom of the Borough Ad Hoc 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.

7.4 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).

7.5 The Council's ability to co-opt members derives principally from the Local Government Act 1972. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 establishes that co-opted members of committees who are not elected Councillors do not generally have voting rights. There are exceptions to this rule which do not apply in this case.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- Report to the Freedom of the Borough Panel 15 April 2021

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – draft article for Our East End
- Appendix 2 – draft nominations form
- Appendix 3 – options for scrolls and similar awards

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

**List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None.

**Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A