

Annex 2.6 - EEBC Freedom of the Borough - Protocol

Background

To be granted the title of Honorary Freeman is a mark of distinction upon the person whom the Council wishes to honour. The Freedom itself carries no privilege and is purely an honour on whom it is conferred or as recognition of significant and valuable services rendered to the Borough by that person. It is normally an honour or award to persons of note who have lived or worked in the borough, and who are proud to be a part of the Borough's history by becoming freemen. The title of Honorary Freeman **cannot** be awarded to serving councillors.

What criteria is to be used to award this status?

The overriding principle is that these awards should be made on merit, defined as:

- Achievement
- Exceptional Service

Awards should not be for a job well done or because someone has reached a particular level. They should be awarded because an individual has 'gone the extra mile' in the contribution they have made or stand out 'head and shoulders' above others in what has been achieved.

To be considered, the nominee should meet at least 2 of the following criteria:

- delivered in a way that has brought distinction to borough life and enhanced the borough's reputation in the area or activity concerned
- contributed in a way to improve the lives of those less able to help themselves
- demonstrated innovation and entrepreneurship which is delivering results in the borough.

As this is the highest honour that a Borough council can grant it should be used sparingly and should not be given too often in order to preserve its status and value.

The title of Honorary Freeman does not give any rights but it is hoped that person would support the Office of Mayor at civic functions.

The Process

The decision to confer the status of Freeman is made by Full Council following receipt of a recommendation by all **Political Group Leaders** following nomination by any elected member of the Council.

For candidates to be considered they must be able to demonstrate a strong and continuing connection with, and commitment to, the Borough or have made a major contribution to national life and in doing so, have enhanced the reputation of the borough.

To assist it is suggested that this could include the following:

- Artistic and cultural endeavours
- Business, economic growth and prosperity
- Charitable work
- Improvement to the built and natural environment
- Religious and spiritual life
- Sports activities
- Civic service

Only in exceptional circumstances should consideration be given to the admission of organisations.

The Procedure

The Standards and Constitution Committee has agreed the following procedure.

Nominations for persons or organisations to be granted Freedom of the Borough, may be made by any serving Member of the Council to the Chief Executive* on the appropriate form (see Appendix A). Each nomination must contain the support of at least 10 Members of the Council and where appropriate, the member should first raise the matter for discussion within their political group.

The Chief Executive* will check that sufficient information has been provided on the form and will then pass the nomination to the Leader of the Council for their consideration.

The Group Leaders and the Mayor will meet to consider the nomination against the criteria. Following unanimous agreement, they will invite the Chief Executive* to write a report making a recommendation to Council that the honour is bestowed. Alternatively they may decide that the nomination is not suitable as it does not meet the criteria.

The Leader shall present the report to Council and, should Council accept the nomination, a Special Meeting of Council would then be called to pass the resolution pursuant to Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, for the admission as Honorary Freemen of the Borough of the relevant persons.

**where the Chief Executive is not available, this role and authority is passed over to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration and in their absence the Head of Legal.*

The Ceremony

The ceremony for the admitting of an Honorary Freeman is to be a very formal occasion. Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (sub section 5) deals with the admission to the Freedom of the Borough by Borough or City Councils of 'persons of distinction and persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough'.

The act provides that a special meeting of the Council (made public 5 days prior to the meeting) must be convened with the specific object of passing the resolution to Honorary Freedom - one of the highest honours that the Borough can bestow. This will take place on the same date as the Annual Council meeting when possible.

The resolution should recite the grounds upon which the recommendation is being made, and details of the public services rendered by the recipient should be included. The resolution must be passed by not less than two thirds of the members present.

The procedure should be carried out with the utmost formality and the Honorary Freeman Elect is invited and should attend the Council Meeting and be placed on the right hand of the Mayor.

After the passing of the resolution, the newly admitted Freeman should take the appropriate Freeman's Oath and sign the Freeman's Roll, his/her signature being witnessed by the Mayor and the Chief Executive or nominated Officer.

A sealed and illuminated certificate of the grant of Honorary Freedom, containing a copy of the formal resolution, should then be presented to the newly appointed Honorary Freeman by the Lord Mayor with a Freedom of the City medal, with an opportunity being given for the recipient to reply.

After the formal proceedings come to an end, it is usual to close the meeting and adjourn for a reception. This gives an opportunity for the invited guests to offer their congratulations to the newly appointed Honorary Freeman.

APPENDIX A

NOMINATION FORM FOR FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH.

I, Councillor wish to nominate the following Person/Organisation to be considered for the status of Freedom of the Borough of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council.

Nominee.....

I am aware that the following criterion needs to be applied to the achievements of the nominee.

They have:

- delivered in a way that has brought distinction to borough life and enhanced the borough's reputation in the area or activity concerned
- contributed in a way to improve the lives of those less able to help themselves
- demonstrated innovation and entrepreneurship which is delivering results in the borough.

I believe that they have met this criteria in the following way:

Please continue overleaf or attach supporting evidence.

We the undersigned Councillors support this nomination for Freedom of the Borough:

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.