

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Award of Honorary Freedom of the City of Lancaster to Mr John McGuinness Thursday 9th November 2006

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider awarding of the Freedom of the City of Lancaster to Mr John McGuinness, together with the arrangements for an appropriate ceremony.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That in pursuance of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, this Council confers the Freedom of the City of Lancaster on Mr John McGuinness at a Special Meeting of the City Council to be held in February 2007.**
- (2) That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make the necessary arrangements for the meeting and a celebratory reception in consultation with the Right Worshipful the Mayor of Lancaster.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 John McGuinness is a man born and bred in Morecambe, and who is known the world over for his achievements in the motorcycle world.
- 1.2 2006 has been a landmark year for the 33 year old, who has increased the number of his TT wins to 11, placing him 3rd on the all time winners list. He has also shattered lap records, this year averaging speeds of over 129 miles per hour.
- 1.3 John never fails to mention his home town of Morecambe, and through his achievements he continues to put the town on the map throughout the world.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 It is proposed that with the agreement of this Committee, John McGuinness be awarded the Freedom of the City of Lancaster at a Special Meeting of the Council to be held on a date to be agreed in February 2007. Morecambe has been part of the City of Lancaster since 1974.

- 2.2 The date for the Special Meeting will be agreed between the Mayor, the Council and Mr McGuinness, but it is initially hoped that the meeting will take place at 6.00pm and will be followed by a celebration reception, both to be held in Lancaster Town Hall. A guest list will be agreed prior to the dispatch of invitations.
- 2.3 It is also an option to extend the number of invited guests to include a number of members of the public, who may apply for an invitation to attend and be selected by ballot by the Mayor. As well as being known throughout the world, John has a great number of local supporters who would be delighted to have the opportunity to be part of the event.
- 2.4 It is proposed that the resolution to be passed at the meeting in February 2007 would be as follows:

“That in pursuance of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, this Council confers the Freedom of the City of Lancaster on Mr John McGuinness, in recognition of his achievements in the field of motorcycle racing being one of the most successful TT riders on record, his continued promotion of his home town, and as a demonstration of the high regard in which he is held not only in this district, but throughout the world.”

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 Mr McGuinness has indicated that he would be delighted to accept this honour should it be bestowed upon him by the City, and initial discussions with members of the Council have indicated that there is Council support for this award.
- 3.2 The Lancaster and Morecambe Citizen Newspaper held a campaign during June and July 2006, and as well as the return of over 70 coupons, they received over 700 votes in favour of this award via their website. The votes were not only cast from within the district, but also from throughout the Country.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 4.1 The options available to the Council are to confer the title of Honorary Freeman on John McGuinness at a Special Meeting of the Council with or without a celebratory reception to follow, or not to confer the title.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the City Council confer the title of Honorary Freeman of the City of Lancaster as outlined in the report. All arrangements for the event will be made by the Head of Democratic Services, in consultation with the Mayor and other interested parties..
- 4.3 It is normal practice following such events for the Mayor to host a celebration reception, and the cost of this can be met from within existing budgets. The Mayor has agreed that the Council will present Mr McGuinness with a Freedom Scroll, and is willing to meet the cost of the event from within the Mayoral Hospitality Budgets. The level of expenditure will be agreed in consultation with her to fit in with her hospitality programme for the year.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 There is a definition that a person being considered for the status of Honorary Freeman should be a person of distinction who has, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the City. Mr McGuinness is a leader in his chosen

field, and has continually recognised his home town which has given publicity to this district across the world. The response to the campaign in one of our local newspapers has demonstrated the high regard in which he is held in the district, the country and throughout the world, and it would be fitting to reward his achievements in this way.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2006/2007 budget for Civic Hospitality is £12,100. The maximum estimated cost of the Freedom Ceremony would be in the region of £3,000 which would include the production of an illuminated certificate (Scroll) and a celebration reception in the Town Hall for a number of invited guests following the special meeting of the City Council. These costs can be contained from within existing budgets.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a principal Council of a district having the status of a City, 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 persons of distinction and persons who have in the opinion of the Council rendered eminent services to the City.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letter from Mr M Donlan, Lancaster and Morecambe Citizen dated 07 July 2006.

Contact Officer: Lisa Jackson

Telephone: 01524 582070

E-mail: ljackson@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: