

Croydon Council

REPORT TO:	SPECIAL COUNCIL 20TH July 2015
AGENDA ITEM:	3A
SUBJECT:	GRANTING OF FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH
LEAD OFFICER:	Director of Legal & Democratic Services, Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: Not relevant to Honorary Titles	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: Not relevant to Honorary Titles	
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO: Not applicable	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

To agree the recommendation of the Mayoralty and Honorary Freedom Selection Sub-Committee that Mr Ian Austen be granted the Freedom of the Borough in recognition of the eminent service he has rendered to Croydon by resolving:

“That this Council does hereby confer upon Mr Ian Austen the title of , Honorary Freeman of the London Borough of Croydon in recognition of his eminent service to the Borough, and local government, and do hereby admit him to be an Honorary Freeman of the said Borough; and that the Common Seal be affixed to a copy of this Resolution.”

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report seeks agreement to granting Freedom of the Borough to Mr Ian Austen as recommended by the Mayoralty and Honorary Freedom Selection Sub-Committee as resolved at it's meeting on the 13th July 2015 having considered a report moved into Part A of the agenda prior to taking it's decision.

3. DETAIL

Eligibility Criteria

- 3.1 The Council has the power to grant a person the title of honorary freeman or freewoman of the Borough. The criteria for being admitted

as an honorary freeman or freewoman are that they are persons of distinction or who have rendered eminent service to Croydon.

- 3.2 The title is rarely awarded. Past recipients have been Lord Weatherill (a former Speaker of the Commons), Colonel McLelland (a former Representative Deputy Lieutenant), Lord Bowness (a former Leader of Croydon Council and a Life Peer), Bishop Wilfred Wood (a former Bishop of Croydon), former Councillors Adrian Dennis & Derek Loughborough, a previous Chief Executive, Mr. David Wechsler and Mr Malcolm Wicks MP (posthumously).
- 3.3 The granting of Freedom of the Borough does not grant the title holder any legal rights or responsibilities. For example they have no rights to attend Council or committee meetings nor can they be paid an allowance. However, it does maintain a symbolic connection with the Council.

Nominee

- 3.4 Ian Austen, a former journalist at the Croydon Advertiser, has reported extensively on the borough's affairs for 46 years. His dedication to Croydon and its people has seen him champion the borough and campaign for important causes; he has also held the political leadership to account in a career spanning six decades. Reporting on a number of Croydon firsts, he covered the election of the borough's first Labour council and campaigned to help bring the trams to Croydon – a story he followed from inception, to attending parliamentary debates through to achieving royal assent. More recently he has championed the borough's ambitious regeneration plans including the town centre and Whitgift Shopping Centre redevelopment. He has also given unstinting public service by ensuring the debates and decisions of the Council have been reported, giving residents a chance to read about the issues that affect their daily lives. The Council recognises this unparalleled achievement in local journalism, and his unique contribution to Croydon life.

Process

- 3.5 This Special Meeting of the Council is being held to pass the resolution to grant the freedom of the borough, with the actual award of the honour, once sealed, being made at a later meeting of the Council which is scheduled for October post recess. This would enable Members to make their speeches and to invite Mr Ian Austen to address the full Council.
- 3.6 It is anticipated that a small reception would be held by the Mayor, prior to the award of the honour, so that photographs could be taken and Ian Austen and his personal guests received outside of the formal business of the Council Meeting.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 None for the purpose of this report. However, the nominations for recipients are made via the cross-Party membership of the Honorary Freedom Selection Sub-Committee.

5 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are no such considerations as the limited resource required for this function can be met from within existing budgets.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The awarding of such titles is within the powers of the Council and is governed by section 249(5), of the Local Government Act 1972.

Report co-ordinator: Julie Belvir
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Background Documents: None