

FREEDOM OF ENTRY INTO THE BOROUGH

Report of the Chief Executive

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report details a proposal to formally transfer the Freedom of Entry into the Borough of Stockport that had previously been granted to the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment in 1969 by the former Stockport Country Borough Council to the Mercian Regiment.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Mercian Regiment was formed on 1 September 2007 comprised of former county Regiments and their past antecedent Regiments. The Regiment was formed from The Cheshire, Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters, Staffordshire and West Midlands and Kings Cheshire Regiments.
- 2.2 The new regiments face the challenge of creating a new identity and pride, whilst retaining the history and heritage of their component parts.
- 2.3 The custom of recruiting by geographical area means that many regiments have the highest honour of Freedom of Entry granted to them. This honour is uniquely in the gift of local authorities and is enshrined in local government legislation – most recently in Section 249 the Local Government Act 1972.
- 2.4 During 2006, the Council received a request from the Colonel of the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment, Brigadier Andrew Sharpe, requesting that the existing Freedom of Entry into the Borough granted to the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment be duly transferred to the Mercian Regiment.
- 2.5 At that time, it was determined that as the request related to a transfer of the existing Freedom rather than the granting of a new Freedom of Entry, the Council Meeting did not need to formally utilise its powers under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 and pass a resolution to give effect to this request.
- 2.6 Notwithstanding the above position, the proposal was informally put before an ordinary Council Meeting on 19 December 2006 as part of the 'Mayor's Announcements' whereupon the suggestion was agreed by acclamation.

3. THE CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Advice and guidance has been received from the National Association of Civic Officers which states that the transfer of a Freedom of Entry would necessitate the Council exercising its powers under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 3.2 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009) stipulates that the grant of Freedom of Entry to the Borough must be exercised by resolution of the Council Meeting at a

meeting which is specially convened for that purpose and is approved by a two-thirds majority.

- 3.3 Accordingly, the Council Meeting is being asked to regularise the position by formally exercising this power to give effect to the previously expressed will of the Council to transfer the Freedom of Entry to the Borough to the Mercian Regiment.

4. RECOMMENDATION

To pass the following resolution:-

“That in and by virtue of the power conferred on this Council under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, and being aware of the grant of Freedom of Entry to the former Borough of Stockport to The 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment in 1969 and wishing to continue to recognise and foster the close association between the Borough and The Regiment and its successors do hereby confer upon The Mercian Regiment, the Freedom of Entry to the Borough and thereby the right to march through the streets of the Borough on all ceremonial occasions, with bayonets fixed, drums beating and colours flying.”

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Craig Ainsworth on tel: 0161-474-3204 or by email on craig.ainsworth@stockport.gov.uk