



Protocol on Conferring Freedom of the City

Council Business Management Committee, 9 May 2022

- 1.1 Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council, at an extraordinary meeting called specifically for the purpose and by a resolution passed by at least two thirds of members present and voting, to confer Freedom of the City on:
 - (a) any person of distinction or
 - (b) any person who has, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the City.
- 1.2 Full Council is responsible for conferring Freedom of the City, following recommendations submitted by Council Business Management Committee (CBM).¹
- 1.3 On receipt of a request for its use, Democratic Services will notify the Assistant Director of Governance of the request, who will submit a recommendation to CBM, with an assessment of the application against the criteria set out below.
- 1.4 During this process Members will respect the confidentiality of the nominee until there is a formal public announcement by the Council.
- 1.5 The Freedom of the City is the highest honour which the Council can bestow. It is a signal honour, recognising a significant contribution to public life that has enhanced the reputation of the city nationally and internationally.
- 1.6 Whilst each application is considered on its merits, the following general criteria will be taken into account;
 - A branch of the armed forces with a particular connection with Birmingham.
 - Any person born in Birmingham or with a particular connection with Birmingham who has brought distinction to city life and enhanced the city's reputation or has actively contributed in a way to improve the lives of those less able to help themselves.
 - Has Demonstrated innovation and entrepreneurship which is delivering results in the city.

¹ [Birmingham City Council Constitution](#), Part B4.2 (i) and Part B5.1

- 1.7 This can include significant contributions in any of the following areas:
- 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
- 1.8 The overriding principle is that these awards should be made on merit; It should not be for a job well done or because someone has reached a particular level.
- 1.9 As this is the highest honour that a council can grant it should be used sparingly and should not be given too often in order to preserve its status and value.
- 1.10 In keeping with special nature of the award conferment should be strictly limited to those who have made a very significant contribution to the City. It should be noted that the Council can award a Lord Mayors award which is intended to recognise those who have made an important contribution to the community especially in a voluntary capacity.
- 1.11 Self Nomination or lobbying may result in the nomination being rejected.
- 1.12 Former Councillors should not ordinarily be considered as there is a separate statutory provision for conferring the title of ‘Honorary Alderman’ on former Councillors.

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