

## **REPORT TO Executive**

**Date of Meeting: 14 April 2015**

**Report of: Corporate Manager, Democratic & Civic Support**

**Title: FREEDOM OF THE CITY**

### **Is this a Key Decision?**

No

### **Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

#### **Council**

##### **1.1 What is the report about?**

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposal to offer the Freedom of the City to Mr Tony Rowe in recognition of his outstanding services to the field of sport (particularly Rugby Union) which has led to Exeter's name being known around the world as one which supports sport.

##### **2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 That in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, an Extraordinary meeting of the Council be arranged, on the rising of the Ordinary meeting of the Council on 21 April 2015, to consider granting the Freedom of the City to Mr Tony Rowe.

##### **3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

- 3.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, gives Councils the power to grant "Freedom of the City" to any individual who it feels has given eminent service to the City.
- 3.2 To this end, an Extraordinary meeting of the full Council must be convened to specifically consider this matter, with two thirds of those present, voting in favour.
- 3.3 If the recommendation contained in this report is accepted by The Executive and subsequently adopted by full Council, an Extraordinary meeting of the Council will therefore be organised immediately after the ordinary meeting of the Council scheduled for 21 April 2015, when Members will be asked to consider granting the Freedom of the City to Mr Tony Rowe.
- 3.4 The following nomination has been received in accordance with the following recently agreed criteria against which nominations would be considered:-
- 1. For those who have achieved national, international or world recognition for excellence in their particular field of expertise.**
  - 2. For those who have promoted Exeter during their career so as to significantly raise the profile of the City on a national, international or world basis.**

*"He has come from very an ordinary background, but has shown tremendous entrepreneurial abilities and vision to achieve what he has done, much to the advantage of the City of Exeter.*

*He joined the Royal Marines band at the age of 15, but was made redundant 8 years later. After a successful career in the powerboat business, he had the vision to see how the telecommunications industry was developing and in the 1980's set up South West Telecoms now known as South West Communications Group which employs about 150 people.*

*In 1998 he became the chairman of the Board of Directors of Exeter Rugby Club, and this led to the Club moving to Sandy Park and the formation of the Exeter Chiefs. In 2010 the Chiefs were promoted to the Premiership and have gone from strength to strength. It can be said that he put the Club, and the City, on the National and International Rugby map. The Club has been established on a firm conferencing and catering background.”*

3.5 As such, it is the first nomination to be assessed against these criteria, and as such is recommended for approval.

3.6 In response to this nomination, Mr Rowe has stated:-

*“I would just like to say that I am humbled to think that the City should think of bestowing such an honour on me, after all I am doing a job for the club that I enjoy.”*

#### **4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.**

4.1 Other than a small cost in preparing a suitable ceremonial scroll and hosting a small reception, there are no resource implications.

#### **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

5.1 No comment.

#### **6. What are the legal aspects?**

6.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, gives Councils the power to grant “Freedom of the City” to any individual who it feels has given eminent service to the City.

#### **7. Monitoring Officer’s comments:**

7.1 This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

#### **8. Report details:**

8.1 The Council is asked to consider bestowing the honour to Mr Tony Rowe, due to his services to sport, particularly Rugby Union, which has very much put Exeter on the rugby map, not only on a national basis but also on a European basis. His development of the Sandy Park complex, has been rewarded by the Rugby World Cup organisers’ decision to host three Rugby World Cup games there in 2015. This will therefore put Exeter very much on the world stage.

8.4 It is felt appropriate that Mr Rowe is awarded the honour now, in the light of the above reasons, and also to reflect the Council's on-going commitment to sport within the City, and those who support it, and its aspirations for the City to be nationally recognised as such.

**9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

9.1 This decision will help promote the City as a regional capital and one which supports those who support and promote the City as such.

**10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

10.1 There are no risks associated with the proposals.

**11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?**

11.1 None applicable with this decision

**12. Are there any other options?**

12.1 The Council could decided not to make the award, although it is felt that this would be against the recently approved criteria.

**John Street**  
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**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)**  
**Background papers used in compiling this report:-**

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