

REPORT TO Executive

Date of Meeting: 13 June 2017

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 Rob Baxter 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. This is particularly pertinent now following the Exeter Chiefs becoming Aviva Premiership Champions 2017.

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 25 July 2017, to consider granting the Freedom of the City to Mr Rob Baxter.

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 25 July 2017, when Members will be asked to consider granting the Freedom of the City to Mr Rob Baxter.

3.4 The following nomination has been received in accordance with the following 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.**

“Rob Baxter has been involved in rugby in Exeter for a large number of years and is now the Head Coach for the Exeter Chiefs – the Aviva Premiership Champions of 2017.

Following the Chief's promotion to the Premiership in 2010, Rob has led the team to continual development both on and off the pitch, which has led to the team lifting the LV= Cup, playing in top European status rugby, and two successive Aviva Premiership play off finals, narrowly defeating Wasps in 2017 to become Premiership Champions. The continual development has put the Club, and the City, on the National and International Rugby map. ”

3.5 As such, it meets several of the agreed criteria against which such nominations should be assessed, and as such is recommended for approval.

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

“Obviously it's a huge honour for me to receive personally, but it is also a fantastic indicator of just how far we have come as a club and as a team. Exeter Rugby Club has been a huge part of my life for a great number of years and I've been very lucky to be part of some very special days, the most recent of which came at Twickenham when we were crowned Premiership champions for the first time. To get to that stage, however, has taken a huge amount of work by a great number of people doing things very well. Without the help and support of those people, myself and the club don't get to achieve what we have. This award is as much for them as it is for me.”

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 There are no financial implications contained within this report.

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 of Freedom of the City to Mr Rob Baxter, 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. This has culminated in the Exeter Chiefs being crowned Aviva Premiership Champions in May 2017.

- 8.4 It is felt appropriate that Mr Baxter 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, as well as 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 decide not to make the award, although it is felt that this would be against the Council's approved criteria.

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

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