

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 4 April 2022

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 19 April 2022

Report of: Corporate Manager, Democratic and Civic Support

Title: Freedom of the City

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

This report sets out a proposal to offer the Freedom of the City to Mr Philip Bostock in recognition of his civic service to the city of Exeter.

2. Recommendations:

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 19 April 2022, to consider granting the Freedom of the City to Philip Bostock.

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 19 April 2022, when Members will be asked to consider granting the Freedom of the City to Philip Bostock.

3.4 Members are reminded of the following four criteria against which nominations for Freeman of the City are considered:-

- For those who have extraordinarily served the community over a number of years (minimum of 20 years) in a voluntary or professional capacity;

- For those who have achieved national, international or world recognition for excellence in their particular field of expertise (be it business, entrepreneurial, sport, or any other area);
- 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; and
- For those who have via a particularly extraordinary act, or series of acts, put the safety or wellbeing of themselves secondary to those of others.

3.5 The following nomination has been received in respect of Philip Bostock:-

“Philip has dedicated much of his life to various civic duties. He is the model custodian of everything great about Exeter and through the years shaped much of the city landscape, from Councils to education to preservation. Philip Bostock’s 40-year career in local government began in Cheshire, and led to a range of senior planning, economic development and environmental roles in the north west of England. He was Chief Executive of Exeter City Council from 1997 until his retirement in July 2013. During those 16 years Exeter experienced unparalleled growth, major city centre redevelopment, economic dynamism and a growing international reputation. He was instrumental in the setting up of the South West Regional Assembly in 1997, acting as its inaugural Secretary. He was appointed a member of the Government’s ‘Lifting the Burdens’ Task Force in 2006 and was a longstanding representative for south west district councils within the Local Government Association. He served for many years on the Professional Executive Committee of the Exeter PCT, and was the Chair of Governors of Exeter College during its main period of growth and success and is now a trustee and Vice Chair of the Ted Wragg Trust.

Philip was awarded an OBE for services to Local Government in the 2006 Queen’s Birthday Honours List and was made a Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Devon in 2013. We are proud to call Philip one of Exeter’s greatest ambassadors, with the City’s best interests running right through him!”

3.6 The following additional supporting statements have been received from the Chief Executive Officer of Exeter College; The President of Exeter City Football Club; The Chief Executive Officer of the Ted Wragg Trust; and a fellow Trustee from the Ted Wragg Trust

1. “I wanted to write in support of giving Philip Bostock OBE DL Freedom of the City of Exeter. In addition to his massive contribution to Exeter in his paid employment as Chief Executive of Exeter City Council, he has made an immeasurable difference to Exeter and Devon more widely as a volunteer.

Philip was Governor at Exeter College for a full term of 8 years, he was also Chair of Governors for the maximum permitted period. During this time, he oversaw significant growth in turnover at the College and growing student recruitment, but also steered the ship through the challenges of austerity. In addition, he led the process of recruitment for a new Principal, following Sir Richard Atkins’ 15 years at the College. During Philip’s tenure, the College was judged to be Ofsted

Outstanding and won various national awards. In fact, it was judged to be the best College in the UK twice while he was Chair. For me, Philip is in action, word and deed a man of integrity, honesty and commitment, who always sets high standards through his own behaviours.

Philip was selected by the Lord Lieutenant of Devon to be one of his Deputy Lieutenants and in true Philip style, he has thrown himself into this endeavour and is often seen representing the Queen at various events around Devon taking the place of the Lord Lieutenant of Devon.

Finally, when Philip left the Board at Exeter College, he joined the Board of the Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust, where he is now Vice Chair. He has overseen a period of growth, innovation and improvement, but at its core, the Trust has followed Philip's core value about making a difference to "place."

2. "As Chairman and now President of Exeter City Football Club. I have, on numerous occasions, had to liaise, partner and seek solutions to further the endeavours of the Club and its associated community charity that support the City and whilst Philip was in his role as CEO of the City Council such meetings were amicable purposeful and always achieved beneficial solutions. He has been a significant asset to the City and some of his main projects changed the landscape and nature of what we are and what defines us.

Further to this, as alumni and a past staff member I have been privileged to see first-hand the progression, forward thinking and student need centric approach that has emanated from Exeter College over an extended period of time. During what was a critical time it was Philip's guidance and leadership as the Chairman of the College Board that has championed the aforementioned aspects of the dynamic continued improvement in Further Education within in our city.

Most importantly, wherever and whenever you met with Philip you found a consistent, engaged individual always willing to listen, and as is very evident in so many ways, determined to support and progress all aspects of this City. I wholeheartedly support this application."

3. "Philip has been an exceptional Trustee of the Ted Wragg Trust for five years.

He has played a crucial role in supporting us to transform educational outcomes for our young people across the city and beyond. He epitomises the power of strategic governance to rapidly improve schools. He has demonstrated his skills at board level, also giving direct governance support to our most challenging Exeter schools when they needed skilled and intensive early support. During the last five years the Trust has been through rapid growth and Philip has always given us calm, knowledgeable and challenging support so that we can make the best strategic decisions for the good of all our children.

Philip is completely aligned to the values of the Trust; he is completely selfless and believes passionately in civic duty and the power of local partnerships to transform society. I am so privileged and humbled to work with such a wonderful, committed trustee who gives up so much time to support the young people of Exeter and who makes such a positive contribution to our local education community."

4. "I am extremely pleased to support the recommendation of Philip Bostock M.B.E for the freedom of the City of Exeter.

Philip as Chief Executive of the city oversaw a major period of growth in our City and indeed it was my working with him and his colleagues, I believe part of the reason why I was granted the freedom of the City.

Philip has since retirement made a significant contribution to education in the city initially as a governor of Exeter College and more recently as a trustee of the Ted Wragg trust, so his work has touched the lives of thousands of young people in the City.

I think Philip richly deserves the Freedom of Exeter and I wholeheartedly support the application.”

3.6 In response to this nomination, Philip Bostock has stated:-

“Over the last 25 years I have devoted a large part of my life and energies to representing, supporting and developing the City of Exeter – for 16 years as Chief Executive of the City Council, then as Chair of the Exeter College Board and now as Vice-Chair of the Exeter-based Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust. I hope I have contributed in some way to the undoubted successes of all of these organisations, and ultimately to the success of the great city with which I am proud to be associated. Being honoured as a Freeman of the City of Exeter, in recognition of this service, means a huge amount to me and it will always be the award that I will prize above all others.”

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

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

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

There are no additional financial implications contained within this report, on the basis that the cost of a ceremonial scroll and reception will be met from approved budgets.

6. What are the legal aspects?

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:

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 Philip Bostock

8.2 Members are reminded that the way in which such nominations are considered by the Council was changed at the Executive Committee meeting on 10 April 2018 (minute number 46 refers) whereby an Assessment Panel would sit to consider the written submissions received.

8.3 This Panel was to comprise of:-

- The Leader of the Council (or nominee)
- The Leader(s) of other political groups on the Council (or nominee(s))
- The Chief Executive & Growth Director (or nominee from the Strategic Management Board)
- The Corporate Manager, Democratic & Civic Support
- An external representative (Professor Brian Kirby has taken up this role)

8.4 Due to the current coronavirus pandemic, the Panel considered the nomination via email, and felt satisfied that the necessary criteria had been met to forward the nominations to the Executive for acceptance and onward recommendation to an Extraordinary Council meeting, which, it should be noted, that legislation dictates should be convened specifically for this purpose. Statute also dictates that 2/3rds of those attending the Council meeting must vote in favour of the decision.

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

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?

There are no risks associated with the proposal.

11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act .

12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

12.3 There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

13. Are there any other options?

The Council could decide not to make the award, although it is felt that this would be against the Council's approved criteria.

Baan Al-Khafaji – Director, Corporate Services

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Nomination

Council's approved process for considering such nominations

Contact for enquires:

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