

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE
4 DECEMBER 2012

FREEDOM OF THE CITY: HMS DEFENDER

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, gives Councils the power to grant "Freedom of Entry to the City" to military units closely associated with their community.
- 1.2 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. 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 prior to the ordinary meeting of the Council scheduled for 26 February 2012, when Members will be asked to consider granting HMS Defender the Freedom of Entry to the City.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The City of Exeter has had a long association with the Royal Navy. Most recently this has been with its association with HMS Exeter who was granted the Freedom of the City in 1977, and last exercised this right on 25 October 2008 before her decommissioning in 2009. This affiliation was much appreciated by the Royal Navy itself which was evidenced by the gifting of one of HMS Exeter's nameplates to the City, with this now hanging in the main hall of the Guildhall.
- 2.2 Since then, and as reported to Executive on 16 September 2009, the Royal Navy offered the City the chance to be affiliated to one of its latest warships, HMS Defender, one of only 6 Type 45 destroyers. The City shares this honour with only one other City, that being Edinburgh.
- 2.3 This is considered to be a great honour and recognises the close bond between the City and the Royal Navy. In the words of the offer letter in 2009, from The First Sea Lord "The Royal Navy values greatly the close interest and support afforded to your previous affiliated ship HMS Exeter; these bonds were developed and wonderfully maintained throughout her life. I attach great importance to the continuation of the close relationship between the City of Exeter and the Royal Navy."
- 2.4 Since its launch on 21 October 2009, which the then Lord Mayor (Cllr John Winterbottom) attended, relationships between the Ship and the City have continued to grow with representatives of the Ship's Company attending many civic events, including the annual Armed Forces Day and the City's Service of Remembrance.
- 2.5 The Ship will officially be commissioned on 21st March 2013 and will then enter service with the Royal Navy at that time.
- 2.6 It is felt that to ensure close links with the Ship and the Royal Navy are maintained, it would be most appropriate for HMS Defender to be granted "Freedom of Entry to the City".

3. RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 That in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, an Extraordinary meeting of the Council be arranged, immediately prior to the Ordinary meeting of the Council on 26 February 2012, to consider granting Freedom of Entry to the City to HMS Defender.

John Street
CORPORATE MANAGER, DEMOCRATIC & CIVIC SUPPORT

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

Date: 24 October 2012