

## **REPORT TO EXECUTIVE**

**Date of Meeting:** 1 September 2020

## **REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**Date of Meeting:** 20 October 2020

**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 Richard Jacobs in recognition of his outstanding service to the City of Exeter as a local businessman and entrepreneur.

### **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 20 October 2020, to consider granting the Freedom of the City to Richard Jacobs.

### **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 20 October 2020, when Members will be asked to consider granting the Freedom of the City to Richard Jacobs.
- 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 Richard Jacobs:-

- “1. Founder Chair of the Marsh Barton Forum. Founder and chair of the Exeter Business Forum worked with the city council, and supported the appointment of a city centre manager, CCTV in the city centre and the Princesshay development. Also provided a significant assistance with the relocation of the Met Office to Exeter. Worked with the county and other local authorities for the economic development of the city. Went to London with Chester Long and Bernard Frowd to lobby for unitary status for the city.
2. A magistrate in the city for 23 years and chairman of the youth panel for 9 years, working with the youth justice team brought central Devon Magistrates’ court to become the third best in the country for dealing with troubled young people.
3. Encouraged the business community to support Exeter Cathedral over the last 10 years providing significant funding through an annual carol service and supporting the Grand Nave dinner.
4. Founder trustee of the Ted Wragg Trust, originally a governor of St James school. Now the Trust is responsible for all secondary schools in Exeter except St Peters, that is Saint James, West Exe, Isca, St Luke’s and Cranbrook. Also three primary schools. All the above secondary schools were taken over in a very poor state either in need of improvement or in special measures. Most are now in either good or close to good and St James is close to outstanding. The Trust is now a 40 million turnover business and growing rapidly. At the request of the Regional Schools Commissioner the trust is now supporting two schools in Exeter.
5. Worked with Emara Roth and John Street arranging for 400 citizens of the city to go to Plymouth for a tour of HMS Defender also worked with the city for the provision of a table for the captain’s cabin on HMS Defender.
6. Director and major shareholder in EIC Group and Southwest Metal Finishing Ltd., a family owned company employing 190 people, 120 of them in Exeter. Specialising in the metal finishing of aerospace components. Also a significant property holding in Marsh Barton and worked with the city council for the provision of Exeter workshops which for over 30 years has provided workspace for start up businesses. . Has made a significant investment in the Canal and Quay area and the Piazza Terracina. This area has become a major tourist attraction ad has brought new life into that area of the quay. Converted part of

the old Maritime Museum to provide a Cookery School, Bakery and Wedding Dress retailed. Just completed a new building to accommodate the Rockfish restaurant.

3.6 The following additional supporting statements have been received on behalf of the Ted Wragg Trust and Exeter Cathedral

1. "Richard is a founder Trustee of the Ted Wragg Educational Trust. He has been dedicated and committed member of the Board since its inception. The Trust has changed the educational landscape of Exeter, transforming life chances for our children and especially raising aspirations for school children in the most deprived schools. He has not only been a sponsor of many local projects, but also provided real business acumen at the Board level. His commercial experience and awareness has helped us create solid financial foundations and grow to the Trust we are today. We now operate as a financially sound Trust providing education for over 7000 children across Devon. Richard's pride and dedication to the city of Exeter and its children deserves recognition and we are delighted to support this honour as a reflection of the positive effect he has on the educational landscape in Exeter and its hinterland. I am proud to call him a friend and as well as Trustee – and the city should be too!"
2. "Here at the cathedral, we are immensely grateful for Richard's long-term support. Not only has he been very generous personally, but he has been the lynch-pin for our engagement with the Exeter business community. In particular, he has for 10 years helped organise our Christmas Business Carols Service, he has played a key part in inviting local businesses to attend, and in encouraging their donations, both on the evening and throughout the year. He is a kind, generous, and well-known figure at the heart of Exeter, and must deserves public recognition."

3.7 In response to this nomination, Richard Jacobs has stated:-

"This is a huge honour that I am delighted to accept.

I have always tried to support the city and its officers and I am proud of our city's massive achievements in recent years. Thank you so very much. I am also proud of the achievements of the Ted Wragg trust. Having started as a governor of St James School and now a director of a £40 million pounds company providing excellent education and opportunities for the vast majority of children in our state schools."

**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 Richard Jacobs

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 because: because the report is for information only.

## **12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

12.1 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.

**John Street, Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support**

Author: John Street, Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support

## **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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