
Extraordinary Meeting of the City Council

19th March 2013

Names of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities): Councillor Philip Townshend

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Customer and Workforce Services

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Conferring the Freedom of the City on Her Majesty's Ship Diamond

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The Council are asked to confer the Freedom of the City on H.M.S. Diamond and for an appropriate ceremonial event to be arranged on a date yet to be determined to mark the award of the Freedom of the City on the Ship's company.

Recommendations:

1. In order to affirm the bond between the City of Coventry and the Royal Navy through its affiliated ship, it is recommended that the City Council confers the Freedom of the City on H.M.S. Diamond and that the following formal resolution, in traditional script, be passed:

"That the Council of the City of Coventry, being deeply sensible of the distinguished record and glorious tradition of those Ships of the Line bearing the name H.M.S. Diamond, over many years of loyal service to Sovereign and Country, and being desirous of reaffirming the respect and friendship of the City and sincerely wishing for this association to be fostered and strengthened, do confer upon Her Majesty's Ship Diamond the Freedom of Entry into the City and the right in perpetuity on all ceremonial occasions of honouring the City by exercising the privilege by marching through the City with colours flying, drums beating and bayonets fixed."

2. That an appropriate bespoke gift bearing the city's Coat of Arms and an Illuminated Minute under the Common Seal of the Council be presented for display on board ship as a symbolic gesture of the value of the affiliation.
3. In order for the citizens of the city to feel engaged and witness the privilege that has been granted, that officers arrange a ceremonial Freedom Parade and reception at a date still to be determined, in consultation with the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities).

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Report title: Conferring the Freedom of the City on Her Majesty's Ship Diamond

1. Context

- 1.1 The City of Coventry was last associated with a Royal Naval Ship when the City Council resolved on 13th September 1988 to grant the title of Freedom of the City to H.M.S. Coventry with the privilege conferred in a ceremony on 22nd July 1989. The ship was affiliated to the city until January 2002 when she was decommissioned from Royal Naval service.
- 1.2 It was in October 2007, to resume the city's long tradition of being affiliated to a naval ship, that the then Lord Mayor and Leader of the Council were honoured to be approached by the Royal Navy and agreed that the city should become affiliated with H.M.S. Diamond, the third in the series of the Royal Navy's new fleet of six Type 45 destroyers bearing the motto "*honor clarissima gemma – honour is the brightest jewel*". They were witness to the ship's launch in Glasgow in November 2007 and since that time the city has strengthened its affiliation in a number of areas. As a mark of dedication to this new affiliation, the refurbished ground floor space in the Council House was named 'The H.M.S. Diamond Suite' and unveiled by the Lord Mayor and Commodore Munns on 17th September 2008. It should be noted that the ship has a dual affiliation with the City of Aberdeen who are yet to confer the Freedom of the City.
- 1.3 Since that time, the ship arrived in Portsmouth in the autumn of 2010 and was commissioned to Royal Naval Service in May 2011. After launching HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in early June, she deployed on her maiden deployment to the Gulf following extensive trials and safely returned 'home' prior to Christmas 2012.
- 1.4 In January 2013, the Commanding Officer gave an interesting presentation to the City Council and partner organisations on the ship's progress so far, as well as an overview of her deployment. This was also the first opportunity for the city to meet the new Commanding Officer of H.M.S. Diamond, Commander Andy Ingham.

2. Options Considered and Recommended Proposals

- 2.1 Whilst undertaking her Royal Naval duties, H.M.S. Diamond is a flagship for the city and promotes the name Coventry during all her activities. Throughout this relatively short time, the ship has forged strong links in a number of areas of the city:
 - 2.1.1 Coventry Cathedral: The Cross of Nails was presented to H.M.S. Diamond on her commissioning in May 2011 and holds prime position outside the Captain's Cabin on board ship. This same Cross of Nails was originally presented to H.M.S. Coventry that was sunk during the Falklands War in 1982. Rescued by divers, the Cross of Nails was presented to the next H.M.S. Coventry, but returned to the Cathedral for safe-keeping on her decommissioning in 2002. H.M.S. Diamond continues to carry forward the city's international message of peace and reconciliation and through the Cross of Nails maintains our historical links with the former H.M.S. Coventrys.
 - 2.1.2 Jaguar Land Rover: To mark H.M.S. Diamond's commissioning, a Captain's table was designed and manufactured by local craftsmen at JLR in Coventry and depicts the city's Coats of Arms through advanced design and bespoke use of their coloured veneers. Furthermore, as part of the launch of HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration, Jaguar Land Rover presented a custom-made red leather Captain's chair for the bridge similarly manufactured by JLR craftsmen.
 - 2.1.3 UHCW Coventry & Warwickshire: H.M.S. Diamond has pledged to fundraise in support of the UHCW NHS Trust Charity with donations designated for the neonatal unit. They will be supporting the Trust Charity for the life of the ship which could last for up to 20 years.

- 2.1.4 City of Coventry Freeman's Guild: It is customary for Royal naval ships to be associated with historical livery companies. As well as Coventry Freeman's Guild, the ship is associated to The Worshipful Company of Barbers and The Worshipful Company of Playing Card Makers.
- 2.1.5 As mentioned briefly in 2.1.2 above, the city of Coventry were privileged to be represented by the Lord Mayor, Jaguar Land Rover and the Freeman's Guild at the launch of HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in June 2012 on board H.M.S. Diamond. Chosen due to her fitting name she arrived into Portsmouth Harbour with a 21 gun salute and giving three cheers to Her Majesty while four Navy helicopters – two Merlin and two Lynx - performed a flypast over the ship in a diamond formation signalling the start of the Diamond Jubilee celebration weekend.
- 2.2 Coventry and its partner organisations gain value from being affiliated with H.M.S. Diamond through them carrying the city's name. If the city did not confer the Freedom of the City (which it did to the city's previous affiliated ship H.M.S. Coventry), this could be seen as unappreciative of their acting as international ambassadors for the city. The value of this ambassador role was evident from a presentation made by the Commanding Officer at the Council in January 2013.
- 2.3 Therefore, in order to affirm the bond between the City of Coventry and the Royal Navy through its affiliated ship, it is recommended that the City Council confers the Freedom of the City on H.M.S. Diamond and that the following formal resolution, in traditional script, be passed:
"That the Council of the City of Coventry, being deeply sensible of the distinguished record and glorious tradition of those Ships of the Line bearing the name H.M.S. Diamond, over many years of loyal service to Sovereign and Country, and being desirous of reaffirming the respect and friendship of the City and sincerely wishing for this association to be fostered and strengthened, do confer upon Her Majesty's Ship Diamond the Freedom of Entry into the City and the right in perpetuity on all ceremonial occasions of honouring the City by exercising the privilege by marching through the City with colours flying, drums beating and bayonets fixed."
- 2.4 It is recommended that an appropriate bespoke gift bearing the city's Coat of Arms and an Illuminated Minute under the Common Seal of the Council be presented for display on board as a symbolic gesture of the value of the affiliation.
- 2.5 For the citizens of the city to feel engaged and witness the privilege that has been granted, it is recommended that officers arrange a ceremonial Freedom Parade and reception, in consultation with the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities). The date will be determined in full liaison with H.M.S. Diamond to take account of the Ship's naval programme.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor are both very supportive of honouring the Ship with the Freedom of the City and have with consulted both the Leadership of the Council and the Opposition.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Following approval by the Council, the organisational arrangements for the Freedom Parade and ceremony will commence. The date will need to be determined in full liaison with H.M.S. Diamond to take account of the Ship's naval programme.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Legal Services

5.1 Financial implications

There are one-off financial implications arising from this report, predominantly the costs associated with the customary ceremonial occasion to mark the privilege. These include:

- Costs associated with Freedom Parade: road closure, barriers, stewards
- Civic Reception following the Parade
- Gift for display in the Commanding Officer's wardroom – [e.g. a silver coat of arms was presented to H.M.S. Coventry].
- Freedom Casket
- An illuminated minute/Freedom scroll

It is anticipated the one-off costs will be shared across the existing 2012/13 Lord Mayor's hospitality budget (£11,182 approximately) and the 2013/14 hospitality budget (£11,810 approximately).

Jaguar Land Rover has also kindly offered to make a donation towards the costs, but the sum is currently unknown.

5.2 Legal implications

The recommendations are in accordance with the provisions set out in Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

One of the City Council's core values is to "...celebrate all that's good about our city and its future". To confer the esteemed title of Freedom of the City on H.M.S. Diamond is a prestigious honour that will have a positive impact on the City Council and the City of Coventry.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Not applicable.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

There is a one-off financial impact which will be met from within the budgets allocated to the Lord Mayor's office.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

None

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Reference is made in Section 2 of this report of the interaction between partner organisations and H.M.S. Diamond. They too will gain from the positive benefits of being affiliated to the ship and carrying their name.

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