



**Extraordinary  
Meeting of Council**

**20 July 2011**

**Matter for Decision**

Title: **PROPOSAL TO ADMIT THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT AS AN  
HONORARY FREEMAN OF THE BOROUGH**

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## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to bring before the Council a proposal from the Mayor to confer upon the Royal Anglian Regiment the Honorary Freedom of the Borough and, accordingly, to admit the Regiment as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough.

## **2. Information**

2.1 Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the Act”), as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, gives Councils the power to bestow the honour of Honorary Freeman and to grant “freedom of entry” to the Borough to persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the authority rendered eminent services to that place or area. The practice provides a dignified and satisfactory means of enabling the Borough to honour a distinguished unit of Her Majesty’s Forces, the Royal Anglian Regiment, which is a military unit closely associated with the Borough.

2.2 To this end, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council must be convened to specifically consider the matter, with two-thirds of those present voting in favour of granting the Royal Anglian Regiment freedom of entry into the Borough “to march through the streets of the Borough with colours flying, band playing and bayonets fixed”. Accordingly, the Mayor requested the Chief Executive to convene an Extraordinary meeting of the Council, at which the resource implications of granting of Freedom of the Borough would also be considered.

2.3 The title of Honorary Freeman is the highest honour that the Borough can bestow, although it carries no privileges apart from the right to use the title of Freeman and to receive invitations to major civic events.

2.4 The Royal Anglian Regiment was formed in 1964 through the amalgamation of three Regiments of the East Anglian Brigade and the Royal Leicestershire Regiment. The Regiment currently consists of two regular battalions, “The Vikings” (1<sup>st</sup> Battalion) and “The Poachers” (2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion) and one Territorial battalion, “The Steelbacks” (3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion).

2.5 The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (The Poachers) is made up of four companies comprising Company A (Lincolnshire), Company B (Leicestershire), Company C (Northamptonshire) and Company D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire). Company C of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion also draws volunteers from Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.

2.6 The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment, “The Poachers”, is a Light Role Infantry Battalion and is currently based in Cyprus. The Battalion is currently the

Eastern Sovereign Base Area Resident Infantry Battalion and will be the Theatre Reserve Battalion for Afghanistan until the end of 2011. The Poachers recruit from the counties of Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, and are proud of their strong links with these counties.

2.7 Light Role Battalions need to be fit, versatile and fast moving. They fight on their feet, in light vehicles or from helicopters. As the Theatre Reserve Battalion for Afghanistan they may be required to deploy to any part of Afghanistan at extremely short notice to fight in all types of terrain.

2.8 In the past year the Battalion has trained in Kenya, Germany, Cyprus and the UK, with smaller deployments to the Czech Republic and Jordan. The Battalion will be in Cyprus until 2012 when it will move to Woolwich, London.

2.9 Should the honour be conferred, the Regiment has indicated a wish to undertake a parade in Wigston (between Bell Street and Bushloe End) on **Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2011**.

### **3. Financial and Resource Implications**

3.1 Section 249(9) of the Act (as amended) states that a relevant authority may spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address or casket containing an address to a person on whom the authority has conferred the title of honorary freeman or honorary freewoman of the place or area for which it is the authority.

3.2 The costs of the presentation of the actual certificate conferring the honour for presentation are minimal. However, there will be significant costs associated in making the arrangements for formally bestowing the honour and arranging a parade to exercise the freedom, should the Council be minded to grant it.

3.3 The costs include staff time in making the arrangements (including event planning meetings with external bodies), processing of any required road closure order(s), preparation of a traffic management plan, policing and crowd control, and costs associated with any civic reception arranged as part of the event. A report to deal with the making of the road closure order(s) will be submitted to the Service Delivery Committee on 9 August 2011.

3.4 Indicative costs:-

The costs of the Certificate and Civic Event are not specifically budgeted for; therefore, it is suggested that a maximum of £5,000.00 be met from earmarked Reserves. Leicestershire Constabulary have indicated that they would not normally charge for policing such a parade but have asked an event planning meeting be arranged at an early date to involve all interested parties. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 24 August 2011 at the Council Offices. The Leicestershire Constabulary's Operations Planning Department would take a lead role in supporting the event organisers, and have advised that policing arrangements will depend on a number of factors and a full assessment will be carried out in due course.

#### 4. Recommendations

- 4.1 That, in pursuance of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Council confer upon the Royal Anglian Regiment the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston and that, accordingly, the said Royal Anglian Regiment be admitted as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston, in recognition of their distinguished service to Her Majesty's Forces.
- 4.2 That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to the certificate to be presented to the Regiment on its admission as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston.
- 4.3 That arrangements be made to formally bestow the honour at the Council meeting to be held on Tuesday, 27 September 2011.
- 4.4 That the Regiment be invited to exercise their freedom by undertaking a parade through Wigston on Sunday, 9 October 2011 and that a reception for those marching and their families be organised to take place at the Wigston Royal British Legion headquarters on conclusion of the parade.

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<b>Implications</b>	
Health	No significant implications
Environment	No significant implications
Community Safety	None associated with the grant of Freedom of the Borough. Plans for a freedom march would need to be supported by a risk analysis and action plan including arrangements for crowd control and policing/stewarding arrangements.
Human Rights	No significant implications
Equal Opportunities	No significant implications
Risk Assessment	See Community Safety above
Value for Money	No significant implications
Equalities	No significant implications
Legal	All statutory requirements will be identified and complied with.

Background Papers referred to in compiling this report: Correspondence and notes on file held in the Chief Executive's Section.