

**Public**  
**Key Decision – Yes/No**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Honorary Freeman of the District  
**Meeting/Date:** Council – 17th December 2025  
**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Leader  
**Report by:** Elections and Democratic Services Manager  
**Ward(s) affected:** All

---

### **Executive Summary:**

A nomination has been received inviting Members to consider the recognition of the Rt Hon Sir John Major and granting the status of Honorary Freeman of the District of Huntingdonshire.

### **Recommendations:**

The Council is

### **RECOMMENDED**

- (a) **that in accordance with Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council confer the Honorary Freeman of the District of Huntingdonshire to the Rt Hon Sir John Major; and**
- (b) **that arrangements be made for an appropriate ceremony and presentation to admit the Rt Hon Sir John Major as Honorary Freeman of the District.**

*(It is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972 that the foregoing Motions are carried by a majority of two-thirds of the Members in attendance)*

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 In recognition of the positive contribution made to the District by the Rt Hon Sir John Major to history, culture, economy and community life of Huntingdonshire, the Council are invited to consider whether to confer the title of Honorary Freeman under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act") upon the Rt Hon Sir John Major.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Under the provisions of the Act "a relevant authority (meaning the District Council) may admit to be honorary freemen or honorary freewomen of the place or area for which it is the authority –

- (a) persons of distinction; and
- (b) persons who have, in the opinion of the Authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area.

- 2.2 Such a decision must be made at a special meeting of the Authority which has been specially convened for the purpose of passing the resolution to Honorary Freedom of the District where notice of the object of the meeting has been given and by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting upon it.

- 2.3 The admission of persons as honorary freemen or freewomen carries no privilege and is purely an honour.

## **3. PRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.1 Subject to the formal resolution of the Council, it would be the intention to arrange a special presentation ceremony to honour the Rt Hon Sir John Major upon which the freedom of the district might be conferred. This occasion would occur separately in March 2026.

- 3.2 Section 249(9) of the Act enables the District Council to spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address or casket (containing an address) to persons on whom the Authority has conferred the title of honorary freemen or freewomen. At this stage, it is envisaged that the District Council might mark the occasion by the presentation of a scroll at a formal ceremony a reception in the Civic Suite.

## **4. LINK TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE FUTURES, THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 4.1 Admitting the title of Honorary Freeman of the District is the highest honour a Council may bestow and supports the Council's overall vision as set out in the Corporate Plan.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 All Group Leaders have been consulted upon the proposal and unanimously agreed to take this forward to Council for consideration.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a Council by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members at a meeting of the Council, specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, to admit 'persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the borough' as "honorary freeman", "honorary aldermen", "honorary freewoman" and "honorary alderwoman".

## **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Section 249 (9) of the Act allows the Council to spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of discharging its function. The cost of a small reception for the recipient will be met from the existing budgets. There are no additional financial implications of conferring the "Freedom of the District" of Huntingdonshire on the individual.

## **8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 8.1 The Rt Hon Sir John Major served as a Member of Parliament for the Huntingdon constituency from 1979 to 2001 and held a number of Government positions but most notably held the position of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1990 to 1997. The Rt Hon Sir John Major has demonstrated and rendered eminent services to the District through his positions as set out above.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Local Government Act 1972

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

Name/Job Title: Lisa Jablonska Elections and Democratic Services Manager  
Tel No: (01480) 388004  
Email: [lisa.jablonska@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.jablonska@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)