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# **Freedom of the District**

## **Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In recognition of the positive contribution made to the District by Squadrons based at RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth and at RAF Wyton to the history, culture, economy and community life of Huntingdonshire, the Council are invited to consider whether to confer the title of Honorary Freemen under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 upon –

- ◆ The 423rd Air Base Group at RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth; and
- ◆ RAF Wyton.

### **2. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

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 meeting of the Authority which has been specially convened for the purpose 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 does not confer on that person any additional rights.

### **3. PRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

3.1 Subject to the formal resolution of the Council, it would be the intention to arrange special presentation ceremonies to honour those upon which the freedom of the district might be conferred. These occasions would occur separately in 2013 and in the case of RAF Wyton may take place in August to coincide with the commemoration of the Anniversary of the Pathfinder Force.

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 each occasion by the presentation of a scroll at a formal ceremony in Samian Court, adjacent

to Pathfinder House followed by a reception hosted by the Chairman in the Civic Suite.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

4.1 The Council is

##### **RECOMMENDED**

- (a) that in accordance with Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the 423rd Air Base Group at RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth be admitted as honorary freemen of the District of Huntingdonshire;**
- (b) that in accordance with Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, RAF Wyton be admitted as honorary freemen of the District of Huntingdonshire; and**
- (c) that arrangements be made for appropriate ceremonies and presentations to admit the 423rd Air Base Group and RAF Wyton as honorary freemen of the District to be held during April and August 2013.**

*(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.)*

#### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Local Government Act 1972.

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