

Extraordinary Full Council

Tuesday 19 March



Report of: *Mike Jackson, Executive Director of Resources - Head of Paid Service*

Title: *Transfer of (Military) Freedom of the City*

Ward: *Citywide*

Member Presenting Report: Cllr Cleo Lake, Lord Mayor

Recommendation

To transfer Freedom of the City to 39 Signal Regiment.

Summary

57 Squadron, Royal Corps of Signals (part of the Regimental Headquarters of 39 Signal Regiment based at Horfield Army Reserve Centre), was disbanded in 2015 due to restructuring. 39 Signal Regiment have formally requested the City transfer Freedom to them.

The significant issues in the report are:

There are none.



Policy

1. This proposal re-affirms the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces as per Bristol's Armed Forces Community Covenant

Consultation

2. **Internal**
The Mayor and Party Group Leaders support this proposal.
3. **External**
N/A

Context

The Freedom of the City, in military terms, is an honour conferred by a city council upon a military unit, which grants that unit the privilege of marching into the city "with drums beating, colours flying, and bayonets fixed". It is held by the following units in Bristol:

1958 Gloucestershire Regiment

1974 HMS Bristol

2002 HMS Flying Fox

2002 Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment

2008 The Rifles

2009 57 (City and County of Bristol) Squadron (since disbanded), Royal Corps of Signals (Volunteers)

2009 266 (Gloucestershire Volunteer Artillery) Battery, Royal Artillery (Volunteers)

As a reserve unit, 39 Signal Regiment are made up of people who live and work within the area. They have forged strong links with a number of Bristol companies who have all signed Armed Forces Covenant agreements. The regiment has supported the City's Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service as military lead for planning and delivery (Bristol's military units take this in turn each year). By maintaining their role of providing communications from their base in Bristol and with the emergency services at times of crisis such as flooding and other serious incidents, the Regiment's role continues to grow locally. 39 Signal Regiment will continue to support Bristol through Armed Forces representation at Armed Forces Day, Remembrance and other events.

Proposal

Transferring and thus bestowing Freedom of the City to 39 Signal Regiment publicly re-affirms the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces in terms of the Armed Forces Community Covenant. It is likely the regiment will exercise their Freedom by a parade through the city centre in 2020, coinciding with the Royal Corps of Signals centenary and potentially during Armed Forces Week (end of June 2020).

Other Options Considered

4. The Council could decide not to make the award, although it is felt this would be against the Council's efforts to maintain good relations with the Armed Forces and fulfilling our commitment to the Covenant

Risk Assessment

5. There are no risks associated with the proposal.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 8a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
 - i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.
- 8b) N/A

Legal and Resource Implications

A local authority is entitled to confer freedom of the city upon 'persons who have, in the opinion of the authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area' (s.249(5) Local Government Act 1972).

Legal advice provided by Eric Andrews, Lawyer

Financial

(a) Revenue

Any costs associated with exercising freedom through a parade will be covered by existing operational budgets.

(b) Capital

There are no capital costs associated with this proposal.

Land

There are no land matters associated with this proposal.

Personnel

The Lord Mayors Office will manage the Freedom Parade and any other associated operational matters.

Appendices:

Original letter of request

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None