

Title of Report:	Freedom of the Borough Events
Committee Report Submitted To:	Commemoration and Celebration Sub-Committee
Date of Meeting:	05 November 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-	
Strategic	Leader and Champion
Outcome	
Lead Officer	<u>Director of Corporate Services</u>

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	June 2026

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	TBC
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	3104
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	YES/NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	YES/NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date :
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date :
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date :
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date :
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date :
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date :

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a review on the arrangements for conferring Freedom of the Borough awards and to consider arrangements for Freedom of the Borough requests.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Commemoration and Celebration Sub Committee of 03 September 2025, it was agreed to recommend that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee defer for one month to allow Elected Members the opportunity to discuss on how to move forward then refer to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Meeting for decision.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At the Council Meeting on 03 December 2019, Council resolved to agree the following Notice of Motion:

"Freedom of the Borough Arrangements

Council notes the existing arrangements for Freedom of the Borough.

Council proposes that in future:

A single event is held in the latter part of Year 4 of the Council term.

Up to 4 FOB's may be bestowed on worthy citizens or organisations.

Recommendations for FOB's will go forward to a sub committee established for the purpose.

The Committee will also establish basic criteria upon which to determine whether a FOB has been met.

The Committee will put forward the 4 names to CPR/Full Council."

- 2.2 **Appendix B of the Standing Orders provides further detail re Ceremonial protocol:**

"Conferring the Freedom of the Borough

1. Members may propose to confer the Freedom of the Borough on individuals or organisations whose contribution to the Council area is deemed worthy of official recognition. The process shall be instigated by a notice of motion and should include a three hundred word citation that explains the nomination.

2. Consideration of the proposal shall take place at a Special meeting of the Council.

3. The decision to award the Freedom of the Borough shall be made by a simple majority vote of the Members attending the Special Meeting.

4. The Freedom of the Borough will be conferred to the recipient by the Mayor at a special event to be arranged by the Council's Democratic Services team".

3.0 Freedom of the Borough – Health and Social Care Workers

- 3.1 The Council held a Freedom of the Borough Event on 19 April 2024 for the Health and Social Care Workers in both the Northern and Western Health Trusts after resolving to agree to the following Notice of Motion:

“That this Council awards the Freedom of the Borough to all health and care workers who have and continue to provide selfless, dedicated and high-quality lifesaving care to patients and family members in NHS facilities, community settings and households across Causeway Coast and Glens.”

It had been agreed at that time to proceed with this event as it had been awarded mainly for services through Covid.

4.0 Requests for Freedom of the Borough Events

- 4.1 At the Council Meeting on 03 September 2024, the following Notices of Motion were agreed and referred to the Working Group:

Proposed by Alderman Boyle, seconded by Councillor Mairs

“That this Council award the Freedom of the Borough to Hannah Scott, in recognition of her outstanding achievement in winning a Gold Medal in the Women’s Quadruple Skulls, as part of the Great Britain and Northern Ireland team, at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Hannah is the first woman from Northern Ireland to win an Olympic Gold Medal since 1972. Granting the Borough’s highest honour to her would be a fitting recognition of her success, and status as a role model to all young people in this Borough, especially young women and girls.”

Proposed by Councillor Stirling, Seconded by Alderman Callan

“I ask that Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council bestow the Freedom of the Borough onto Hannah Scott in recognition of her amazing achievement of helping Team GB and NI win gold in a thrilling women’s quadruple sculls final at the Paris 2024 Olympics.”

Proposed by Councillor Kyle, Seconded by Councillor McAuley

“In light of Hannah Scott’s tremendous achievement in winning a gold medal during the Paris 2024 Olympics, we the above propose that Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council suitably recognise Hannah with an event in Coleraine, the home of her rowing club, also we propose to consider a fitting and lasting tribute that may act as an inspiration to many young people who strive to the best in the world of their chosen sport.”

A “home-coming” event was held in Coleraine, to celebrate Hannah Scott’s achievements, on 14th August 2024.

- 4.2 The following Citation was received from Councillor Callan with a view to Council considering The Northern Ireland Prison Service for a Freedom of the Borough:

“The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) has a long-standing history of dedicated service and sacrifice, playing a vital role in upholding law and order across the region. As an integral part of the criminal justice system, NIPS has consistently demonstrated professionalism, resilience, and commitment in maintaining public safety and facilitating the rehabilitation of those in custody.

Magilligan Prison, located in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough, is one of Northern Ireland's key custodial facilities. Over the years, it has provided vital employment opportunities to the local community, contributing significantly to the region's social and economic fabric. The prison's staff, past and present, have shown unwavering dedication, working in often challenging circumstances to ensure the security of the institution while fostering an environment that supports personal growth and rehabilitation for those incarcerated.

The service has faced significant challenges throughout its history, particularly during periods of a terrorism campaign in Northern Ireland. NIPS personnel have often put themselves in harm's way, demonstrating exceptional courage and sacrifice to uphold justice and safeguard the community. Their work, both inside and beyond the prison walls, has been instrumental in maintaining order and supporting peacebuilding efforts across Northern Ireland.

Magilligan Prison also exemplifies the broader mission of NIPS, balancing security with humanity and fairness. Through educational programs, vocational training, and other rehabilitative initiatives, the prison plays a critical role in helping individuals reintegrate into society as law-abiding citizens.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service's legacy of service, sacrifice, and commitment to justice is a testament to the men and women who have served within its ranks. Their enduring contributions to the rule of law and community safety continue to be deeply valued by society."

Members should note that the above Citation has not yet been considered by Council.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 It is estimated that each Freedom of the Borough Event costs in the region of £8,000.

5.2 A budget of £20,000 was set aside for 2025/26 for Civic Functions, which covers Freedom Ceremonies.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 **It is recommended** that, as per Item 2.1 above, Members consider establishing basic criteria upon which to determine whether a Freedom of the Borough is merited and then put forward any eligible names for consideration by Council via the Commemorative & Celebration Sub-Committee or Corporate Policy & Resources Committee.

With Members' agreement, Officers will bring the suggested criteria for consideration at the next Sub Committee Meeting.

6.2 It should be noted that Local Government Elections are due to be held in 2027 and a period of sensitivity should be adhered to on the lead-up to the Elections.

It is therefore suggested that any agreed Freedom of the Borough Events should be held in the Spring and/or Autumn of 2026.