

WIRRAL COUNCIL

Cabinet
4 June 2015

SUBJECT:	Freedom of Entry Considerations – HMS Astute and TS Astute
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All Wards
REPORT OF:	Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cabinet Member – Support Services
KEY DECISION?	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report recommends to the Council that it holds an extra-ordinary meeting to confer on both HMS Astute and the Wallasey Sea Cadets Unit (TS Astute) the Freedom of Entry to the Borough of Wirral in recognition of the close links between the Borough, the submarine and the training ship.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 HMS Astute is an operational nuclear-powered submarine in the Royal Navy, the lead ship of her class and is the second submarine of the Royal Navy to be named after the characteristic of shrewdness and discernment.

2.2 Wallasey Sea Cadet Unit is the oldest on Merseyside and became affiliated to HMS Astute which was the newest vessel at the time.

2.3 Under the terms of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to confer the title of distinction of Freedom of the Borough or Freedom of Entry. The former is granted to persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough. The latter is granted to current serving uniformed organisations (usually, but not exclusively, the military) who have rendered conspicuous service and who are associated with the Borough.

2.4 A Freedom of Entry Ceremony is different to a conventional Freedom Ceremony in that, after the formal resolution is passed by the Council at a short meeting in the Council Chamber, the rest of the Ceremony can take place at a later date outside of the Chamber. This will involve the Units forming up for the presentation and then marching through the town “with bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and colours flying”.

2.5 The extra-ordinary Council meeting which would be required could be held immediately before the next scheduled meeting of the Council on the evening

of Monday, 6 July 2015. The movements of the submarine have had to be taken into account in respect of the rest of the Ceremony. A date which is acceptable to the submarine and the Council has been identified as Sunday, 20 September 2015 when the submarine is in dry dock.

- 2.4 If the Council is minded to grant the two Freedoms of Entry to the Borough it is expected that approximately 200 crew and family will attend the Ceremony. All Members of the Council will also be invited as will those on the civic guest list. It is also expected that there will be representatives of the Royal Navy Association and others in attendance but exact numbers are not known at this stage. It is hoped that the Royal Marine Band will be in attendance.
- 2.5 The Council has previously granted Freedom of Entry to the Borough to the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment (1996), Her Majesty's Royal Marines (1998), the Mercian Regiment (2009), 234 (Wirral) Transport Squadron Royal Logistic Corps (Volunteers) (2012) and 107 (Lancashire and Cheshire) Field Squadron Royal Engineers (Volunteers) (2012).

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 None

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 None

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

- 6.1 None

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 8.1 The cost of two framed scrolls is estimated to be approximately £1,200. This cost together with those associated with a civic reception at the Floral Pavilion in New Brighton and a parade can be met from within the Civic Services Budget. Section 249 (6) of the Local Government Act allows Councils to spend 'such reasonable sum as they think fit' on presenting an address or casket containing the address to the Honorary Alderman or Freeman.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Section 248 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits a council of a relevant area, by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting thereon at a meeting of the council specially convened for the purpose, to admit to be honorary freemen of the borough persons of distinction and

persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent services to the borough.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The Cabinet recommends: That

- (1) the Freedom of Entry to the Borough be granted to HMS Astute and its crew be granted, the right, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of Wirral on all ceremonial occasions with bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and colours flying;
- (2) the Freedom of Entry to the Borough be granted to TS Astute and the Sea Cadets they be granted, the right, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of Wirral on all ceremonial occasions with bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and colours flying;
- (3) an extra-ordinary meeting of the Council be convened on 6 July 2015 to grant the Freedoms of Entry; and
- (4) the Freedom of Entry Ceremony and Parade be held on Sunday, 20 September 2015 at New Brighton followed by a Civic Reception at the Floral Pavilion.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 To bestow an honour on both HMS Astute and Wallasey Sea Cadets Unit (TS Astute) who have close links and a long association with each other and the Borough of Wirral.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date