

## **CABINET**

**4 JUNE 2015**

### **7 FREEDOM OF ENTRY CONSIDERATIONS - HMS ASTUTE AND TS ASTUTE**

Councillor Adrian Jones introduced a report of the Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources that recommended that the Council held an extraordinary 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, the ship's company and the training ship.

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

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

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 had to be taken into account in respect of the rest of the Ceremony. A date which was acceptable to the submarine and the Council had been identified as Sunday, 20 September 2015 when the submarine was in dry dock.

If the Council was minded to grant the two Freedoms of Entry to the Borough it was expected that approximately 200 crew and family would attend the Ceremony. All Members of the Council would also be invited as would those on the civic guest list. It was also expected that there would be representatives of the Royal Navy Association and others in attendance but exact numbers were not known at this stage. It was hoped that the Royal Marine Band would be in attendance.

The Cabinet noted that the Council had previously granted Freedom of Entry to the Borough to the 22<sup>nd</sup> (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).

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Cabinet recommends to the Council that in recognition of the outstanding achievements and distinguished services of Her Majesty's Ship Astute and of the close bonds of friendship and mutual respect which have long existed between the Borough and the ships of the Royal Navy, the honour of Freedom of Entry to the Borough be conferred on the Commanding Officer, Officers and men and women of Her Majesty's Ship Astute and thereby the right, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of the Borough on all ceremonial occasions with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, colours flying, bands playing and drums beating;**
- (2) the Cabinet recommends to the Council that in recognition of the outstanding achievements and distinguished services of the Wallasey Sea Cadets (TS Astute) and of the close bonds of friendship and mutual respect which have long existed between the Borough and the ships of the Royal Navy, the honour of Freedom of Entry to the Borough be conferred on the Commanding Officer, Officers and men and women of TS Astute and thereby the right, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of the Borough on all ceremonial occasions with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, colours flying, bands playing and drums beating;**
- (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.**