

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

FREEDOM OF THE CITY – ROYAL AIR FORCE COSFORD

A. PURPOSE

1. To consider a request to confer on Royal Air Force (RAF) Cosford the privilege of having the right to march through the City.
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B. BACKGROUND

2. Since the Second World War the privilege of “honouring the City by marching through its streets with drums beating, bands playing, colours flying and bayonets fixed” has been conferred on the following eleven recipients: Royal Warwickshire Regiment, the 268th (Warwickshire) Regiment Royal Artillery TA, the 35th (South Midland) Signal Regiment, Royal Corps of Signals, the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, HMS Birmingham, the Queen’s Own Hussars (known as the Queen’s Royal Hussars), HMS Forward (Royal Naval Reserve), the West Midlands Regiment, the 202 (Midlands Field Hospital (V), the 26th Regiment Royal Artillery and HMS Daring, the 23rd Special Air Service Regiment (TA), The Birmingham County Royal British Legion, The Guards Division, ‘The Rifles’ and Royal Marines.
 3. In every case the conferment of the privilege has been in recognition of some close association between the Regiment (or other section of the Armed Forces) and the City of Birmingham, either by name and/or by the fact that a significant number of Birmingham residents have served in it.
 4. The exercise of the privilege has normally been timed to coincide with significant anniversaries and such like. Whenever it is exercised, there are costs to the Council in terms of road closures, erecting grandstands, stewarding and catering..
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C. REQUEST THAT ROYAL AIR FORCE COSFORD BE HONOURED

5. RAF Cosford opened on 15 July 1938. Since then it has always had a deep association with the Birmingham, including preparing the Castle Bromwich-built Spitfires for the home front and overseas wartime service.
6. RAF Cosford has supported the City in events such as Remembrance Day and the Birmingham International Military Tattoo; more recently Cosford led on Armed Forces Day as the sole RAF Station in the West Midlands.

7. Through the University of Birmingham Air Squadron, the Station has been taking the City's undergraduates and training them to become RAF Pilots and Commissioned Officers for over 40 years.
8. RAF Cosford is the only RAF station in the West Midlands and it works closely with the Armed Forces Recruitment Office in Birmingham.
9. Most of the West Midlands' candidates who join the RAF through the Birmingham office will at some point visit RAF Cosford on a familiarisation visit to help them to make a decision about joining the Service.
10. These West Midlands' candidates, who go on to become Engineering Officers, Training Officers, Aircraft Maintenance Mechanics, Weapons Technicians, Survival Equipment Fitters, Information Communication and Technology Technicians, Photographers and Physical Training Instructors, will all complete their specialist training at RAF Cosford before going on to serve their country across the globe.
11. If conferment of the privilege is granted Cosford would be the first RAF Station to be granted Freedom of the City of Birmingham.
12. 2018 sees the centenary of the RAF and the 80th Anniversary of RAF Cosford. The City is working closely with the RAF to celebrate these two anniversaries and their significance meet the 'exceptional circumstances' required by the Council for the conferring of the Freedom of the City.
13. Council Business Management Committee is recommending that the privilege of having the right to march through the City be conferred on Royal Air Force Cosford. On this occasion associated cost can be met from Lord Mayor's Office events 2018/2019 budget.

MOTION

- A. That the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Birmingham being deeply conscious and appreciative of the close relationship of our people with Royal Air Force Cosford, are desirous of recognising, perpetuating and fostering still further the bonds of friendship and goodwill which has resulted therefrom by conferring by this resolution the Freedom of Entry into the City upon Royal Air Force Cosford and the right in perpetuity on all occasions of honouring The City of Birmingham by exercising the privilege of marching through the streets of the City with drums beating, bands playing, colours flying and bayonets fixed on all ceremonial occasions.
 - B. That the City Solicitor be authorised to attach the common seal to the Freedom of the City Scroll.
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