

**Brighton & Hove City Council's Policy on awarding the honorary title of Freedom of the City**

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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION & CONTEXT

1.1 Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 permits local councils to confer the honorary title of Freedom of the City on:

(i) *persons of distinction; and*

(ii) *persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent services to the city*

1.2 The only legal requirement necessary for awarding the title is that the Council pass a resolution to that effect at a meeting of Full Council convened for that purpose, where at least two-thirds of the members vote in favour. There is no minimum or maximum number of people on whom the Freedom of the City may be conferred.

As no formal process is stipulated by legislation or statutory guidance, the Council has developed its own protocol for seeking and evaluating nominations prior to seeking Council approval to award the title of Freedom of the City.

## 2. BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL: PROTOCOL

At its meeting in July 2025, the Council resolved to adopt the following approach to nominations for the above award:

### 2.1 Protocol for nominating an individual (or, exceptionally, group of individuals):

2.1.1 The Council invites nominations from members of the public and other stakeholders, provided that nominees meet the essential requirements listed at 2.2.1 – 2.2.2 below.

2.1.2 All nominations which meet the essential requirements will be reviewed by Group Leaders, normally in November, on an annual basis. The deadlines for each cycle will be published on the Council's website.

2.1.3 Group Leaders shall review nominees (normally no more than one nominee per year) for nomination for the title of Freedom of the City. Group Leaders may seek additional information if they consider it necessary before reaching a decision. Their recommendations shall be put to a special Council meeting to seek formal approvals.

### 2.2 Essential requirements for nominations

2.2.1 In acknowledgement of the fact that conferring the honorary title of Freedom of the City is the highest title that a local authority can bestow, the Council shall only consider conferring this honour where the nominated individual (or exceptionally a group of individuals):

- (i) meets the statutory criteria by having in the opinion of the council rendered eminent services to the city, and
- (ii) was born, lives or works in, or has strong links to, the city of Brighton & Hove.

2.2.2 To satisfy requirement (i) above, to 'render eminent services to the city' the nominee will have:

- (a) acted in a way which enhances the city's reputation, for instance through innovation, sporting excellence and/or achievement in the cultural sphere, and/ or
- (b) otherwise contributed positively to the lives of the people of Brighton & Hove, whether by improving the lives of those less able to help themselves or by acting as 'trailblazers': people whose actions serve as an inspiration to others.

2.2.4 Awards may be given on a posthumous basis and may exceptionally be granted to groups of people as long as the group is fixed and can be clearly defined.

### 2.3 Assessment of nominations:

2.3.1 The overriding principle is that this honorary title shall be awarded solely on merit, on the basis of achievement which may be exhibited through exceptional public service.

2.3.2 In considering applications, an inclusive approach will be applied to nominations. This approach aims to reflect the different types of contribution made by nominees across different areas over time. It is hoped that this will encourage a diverse range of nominations, which reflect the diversity of the City of Brighton & Hove.

2.3.3 The above requirements could be met through activity in one of the following examples (a list which is not exhaustive):

- business life and economic growth and prosperity
- artistic and cultural endeavours
- improvement to the built and natural environment
- charitable work
- sporting activity
- religious and spiritual work
- challenging inequality, poverty and discrimination
- promoting a positive image of the city regionally, nationally and internationally
- significantly contributing to upholding the values, life and the image of the city

2.3.4 No nomination shall be considered unless accompanied by the completed form (attached as Appendix 1) together with any supporting information considered



relevant. Each nomination is required to be supported by at least one named supporter(s).

2.3.5 Any queries regarding this protocol should be sent to [democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk)