

Brighton & Hove City Council

Special Council

Agenda Item 11

Subject: Honorary Freedom of the City

Date of meeting: 28 November 2023

Report of: Chief Executive

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 This report recommends that the Council confers the honour of Freedom of the City on Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club in recognition of their significant contribution to the City and their historic achievements.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Council confers the title of Honorary Freedom of the City on Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club.

3. Context and background information

3.1 Brighton & Hove Albion Football club has a long history serving the place and people of Brighton and Hove. Last season, the club finished a record breaking sixth place in the Premier League and qualified for the Europa League for the first time in their 122-year history.

3.2 An independent assessment has shown that Brighton & Hove Albion made an economic impact contribution of more than £600m to the local economy during the 2022/23 season, increasing the city's profile around the world.

3.3 Further, the Brighton & Hove Albion Foundation has for more than 30 years been using the power of football to engage and inspire people to make good life choices, helping to reduce inequalities in our local communities and across Sussex and inspiring individuals to reach their full potential. They deliver award-winning educational and outreach programmes that improve people's physical and mental wellbeing, supports learning and offers inclusive opportunities for everyone to get active and play football.

3.4 The club has shown a continued commitment to sports development within our local communities and it is an inspiration to its fans and to the people of Brighton and Hove. They are widely regarded as running one of the best football community programmes in the country, with a large team of community coaches working tirelessly every day in 35 towns across Sussex, supporting over 5,000 children, young people and adults every week.

3.5 The club has had a positive and meaningful impact on many of our local communities through support for grassroots sport, health work and being a positive role model for so many people.

3.6 It is therefore proposed to award the honour of Freedom of the City to Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club in recognition of their historic achievements and their outstanding contribution to the City.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 The Council has not adopted alternative options for the recognition of services or significant contributions to the city other than conferring the Freedom of the City.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 The Leaders of the Political Groups in the Council were consulted about the proposal at their meeting on 11th July 2023.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The conferral of the honour of Freedom of the city is for the council to determine.

7. Financial implications

7.1 There are no direct financial implications. The costs arising from the award of this title is expected to be met from within existing resources.

Name of finance officer consulted: James Hengeveld Date consulted: 20/11/2023

8. Legal implications

8.1 Section 249 (5) The Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009) enables the councils of cities to confer the status of honorary freeman on "(a) persons of distinction and (b) persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent services to the local area". The award of the title of Honorary Freeman has to be done by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting at a meeting of the council specially convened for the purpose. The Freedom of the City does not confer rights other than to attend formal Council meetings.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date consulted: 18/11/23

9. Equalities implications

9.1 As set out in the report, the proposed recognition of the Club reflects their significant and inclusive community programme.

10. Sustainability implications

10.1 There are no sustainability implications arising from the report.

11. Other Implications

11.1 There are no other significant implications arising from the report

