Brighton & Hove City Council

Council Agenda Item 3

Subject: **Honorary Freedom of the City**

Date of meeting: **26 November 2026**

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 title of Honorary Freewoman of the City on Allison Fackrell and confers the title of Honorary Freeman of the City on Craig Jones.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Council admits Allison Fackrell and Craig Jones to be Honorary Freewoman and Freeman of the City of Brighton & Hove respectively.

2.2 That the Council notes that, very sadly, Allison Fackrell passed away earlier this month following a period of illness and that her family will be attending the ceremony to accept the award on her behalf.

3. Context and background information

3.1 The title of Honorary Freewoman or Freeman is awarded to people who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent service to the city.

Allison Fackrell (nominated by Callum Chapman)

3.2 Allison Fackrell made an exceptional and sustained contribution to the Brighton & Hove community over many years through her work as a foster carer, volunteer, advocate, and magistrate.

3.3 Having lived in Brighton & Hove since 1985, Allison had strong and longstanding ties to the city, where she and her family raised five children. Professionally, she dedicated approximately 18 years to fostering, including around 12 years as an in-house foster carer for Brighton & Hove City Council. She specialised in mother-and-baby placements, a highly specialised area of fostering that provides intensive support to vulnerable parents and their children. Through this work, Allison helped numerous families develop the skills and confidence needed to provide safe and nurturing homes, often supporting parents with complex personal histories and helping to break cycles of disadvantage.

3.4 Her commitment to improving the lives of children and families extended well beyond her professional role. Allison consistently championed the needs and voices of children in care, earning the respect and gratitude of many young people and adoptive families whose lives she positively influenced.

3.5 Alongside her fostering work, Allison gave extensive voluntary service to prison reform and the support of prisoners' families. She played a significant role in organisations supporting families affected by imprisonment, including Sussex Prisoners' Families and the Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT). Through this work, she helped develop support services, contributed to prison family engagement initiatives, and advocated for reforms aimed at reducing reoffending and improving outcomes for vulnerable individuals.

3.6 In recognition of her dedication and advocacy, Allison received PACT's prestigious "Truth to Power" award, reflecting her commitment to ensuring that the experiences of those directly affected by the care and justice systems inform policy and practice. She also contributed her lived experience and expertise to national discussions on prison reform and social justice.

3.7 In addition, Allison served as a magistrate, bringing compassion, fairness, and a deep understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable individuals within the justice system.

3.8 Collectively, Allison's work has had a profound and lasting impact on countless children, families, and individuals across Brighton & Hove and beyond. Through her dedicated service as a foster carer, volunteer, advocate, and magistrate, she consistently demonstrated compassion, leadership, and an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of others. Her exceptional contribution to the community, her tireless support for vulnerable people, and her lifelong commitment to public service made her an eminently worthy recipient of the title of Honorary Freewoman of Brighton & Hove.

Craig Jones (nominated by Michael Pitchford)

3.9 Craig Jones has made an exceptional contribution to Brighton & Hove and the wider United Kingdom through a distinguished career in public service, healthcare leadership, equality advocacy, and charitable work. His achievements have enhanced the reputation of Brighton & Hove nationally and internationally while delivering lasting benefits to countless individuals, including many local residents.

3.10 A longstanding resident with strong connections to the city, Craig has contributed significantly to civic and community life. He served as a Non-Executive Director of Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, helping to support and strengthen local healthcare services, and as a Board Member of the Kemp Town Society, contributing to the preservation and development of one of Brighton's most historic communities. He also founded and led a successful Brighton-based mental healthcare

organisation, creating employment opportunities and providing vital support services for vulnerable people across Sussex.

3.11 Craig is perhaps best known for his pioneering leadership in advancing equality and justice for LGBT members and veterans of the UK Armed Forces. A former Royal Navy officer, he became the first openly gay serving member of the Armed Forces following the lifting of the military ban on homosexuality in January 2000. In doing so, he became a powerful and visible advocate for LGBT personnel, helping to challenge discrimination and transform the culture of the Armed Forces. His leadership in this area was recognised through the award of an MBE for Services to Equality and Human Rights in the Armed Forces.

3.12 To mark the twentieth anniversary of the lifting of the ban, Craig conceived and edited the anthology Fighting With Pride, which gave voice to the experiences of LGBT servicemen and women across several generations. The project led directly to the creation of the charity Fighting With Pride, which Craig went on to lead in several senior roles. Under his leadership, the organisation became the principal charity supporting LGBT veterans affected by historic discrimination, providing advocacy, support and representation to thousands of former service personnel.

3.13 Craig played a central role in securing national recognition of the injustices suffered by LGBT veterans. His campaigning contributed significantly to the establishment of the LGBT Veterans Independent Review and the Government's acceptance of all recommendations contained within Lord Etherton's report. This work helped secure restorative measures, including a £75 million financial recognition scheme for affected veterans. Many beneficiaries of these measures live in Brighton & Hove, where there is a significant veteran population and one of the largest LGBT communities in the country.

3.14 In addition to his advocacy work, Craig has preserved and promoted the history of LGBT service personnel through his writing and public engagement. His publications, including Serving With Pride, have ensured that the experiences of LGBT veterans are documented for future generations and have increased public understanding of an important chapter in British social and military history.

3.15 Throughout his career, Craig has demonstrated courage, integrity and an unwavering commitment to equality, inclusion and public service. He has improved lives, influenced national policy, secured justice for those who had been marginalised, and strengthened Brighton & Hove's reputation as a city that champions fairness, diversity and social progress. His contribution represents an outstanding and enduring legacy of service, making him a highly deserving recipient of the title Honorary Freeman of Brighton & Hove.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 On 10 July 2025 the Council adopted a new policy for awarding the honorary title of the Freedom of the City. Publication of the transparent and clear

policy which explains how nominations for the Freedom of the City can be made aligns with the Council Plan priority to ensure our services are easy to access, that customers are kept informed and that their views are listened to.

4.2 Nominations will next be considered in Autumn 2027. The full details of how to make a nomination and the criteria and timelines for doing so can be found on the Council website.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 The invitation for nominations was publicised on the Council's website and social media channels. The Leaders of the Political Groups in the Council reviewed all nominations received by the deadline of 19 July 2026.

6. Financial implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report

Name of finance officer consulted: Craig Garoghan
Date consulted: 3rd November 2026

7. Legal implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert
Date consulted: 29th October 2026

8. Risk implications

8.1 There are no risk implications arising from the report.

9. Equalities implications

9.1 Freedom of the City is a civic honour that can be granted by the Council to deserving recipients and is used sparingly to maintain the significance of the award. The award of the title of Freewoman of the city to Allison Fackrell and Freeman of the city to Craig Jones recognises their contribution to the lives of people in Brighton and Hove and reiterates the Council's values of equality and inclusion and mission to deliver a Better Brighton & Hove for All. It was previously noted that the way the Freedom of the City had been awarded historically may not have been as open and inclusive at it should be. The new policy adopted on 10 July 2025 ensures the process is more inclusive and transparent, inviting nominations through a clear process and timescale for consideration by Group Leaders and recommendation to full Council.

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.

12. Conclusion

12.1 The conferral of the honour of Freedom of the city is for the council to determine. Given their contributions to the City and their strong local connections, it is recommended that the Council awards the title to Allison Fackrell and Craig Jones.