

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 22 June 2021

BY: Executive Director for Council Resources

SUBJECT: Granting the Freedom of East Lothian to Josh Taylor

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek the Council's agreement to grant the Freedom of East Lothian to Josh Taylor.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That on the nomination of the Provost, seconded by the Leader of the Council, East Lothian Council resolves to present the award of the Freedom of East Lothian to honour the sporting achievements of Josh Taylor, undisputed light-welterweight champion of the world.
- 2.2 To instruct officials to make the necessary arrangements for a Freedom of East Lothian Presentation Ceremony, as soon as practicable.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Provost and Leader of the Council to approve detailed proposals, these to be the subject of a final report to the Members Library.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Authorities may award the freedom of their area in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The freedom is now awarded as a mark of respect, although historically it once offered certain rights and rights to the 'freeman'. In 2004, East Lothian Council granted the Freedom of East Lothian to the world-renowned artist John Bellany from Port Seton, and in 2009 to Catriona Matthew, Women's Open Golf Champion from North Berwick. In 2012, The Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland – or 1 SCOTS – was granted the Freedom of East Lothian and in May 2019 it was also granted to Lothians and Border Yeomanry.

- 3.2 Under the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, Section 206 – ‘Admission of Honorary Freemen’, the Council has the following powers in respect of granting the Freedom of East Lothian: A local authority may, by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the authority the notice of which specifies the proposed admission as an item of business, admit to be honorary freemen of their area persons of distinction and any persons who have rendered eminent service to their area.
- 3.3 Under this legislation, an officer designated for the purpose by the local authority shall keep a roll containing the names of persons admitted to be freemen under this section. In East Lothian Council’s Scheme of Delegation, the Executive Director for Council Resources currently holds this responsibility.
- 3.4 Josh Taylor was born and brought up in Prestonpans where he attended St.Gabriel’s RC Primary School, followed by Preston Lodge High School. He is a professional boxer and last month became the undisputed light-welterweight champion of the world. He has held the World Boxing Association, International Boxing Federation, and Ring magazine titles since 2019 and the World Boxing Council and World Boxing Organisation titles since May 2021. He held the Commonwealth light-welterweight title from 2016 to 2017, and as an amateur, he won a silver medal at the 2012 London Olympics and gold medal at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Josh Taylor is now only the second Scotsman to be an undisputed champion after Ken Buchanan and is the first British fighter to become an undisputed world champion in the “four-belt era” and only the fifth man in the world to achieve this status.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – The costs of any Presentation Ceremony will be met from the Council’s Civic Hospitality budget for 2021/22
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Approved Scheme for the Award of the Freedom of East Lothian – East Lothian Council, January 2005

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