



Special Council
16 May 2012

**Report from the Director of Legal
and Procurement**

For Action

Wards affected:
ALL

**Proposed Conferment of Honorary Freedom of the London
Borough of Brent**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The conferment of Honorary Freedom of the Borough is to recognise persons of distinction who have rendered eminent services and are connected to the London Borough of Brent. The power to award the honour of Freedom of the Borough is contained in Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972. To invoke the provisions of Section 249 it is required that a Special Meeting of the Full Council be convened for the purpose.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That in accordance with the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council of the London Borough of Brent:
- (i) invoke the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer the honour of Freedom of the Borough of Brent on Nick Kent in recognition of the 28 years outstanding service he has given as artistic director of The Tricycle theatre in Kilburn High Road during which time the theatre has received national and international recognition for the quality of its work, its commitment to celebrating diversity and its outreach work with local people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and that this honour of Freedom of the Borough be now so conferred on Mr Nicolas Kent in the year of his retirement from the theatre;

- (ii) subject to (i) above, the granting of the Freedom be presented in an illuminated Scroll and presented to the recipient in an appropriate casket.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Conferring the title of Honorary Freedom of the Borough is the highest honour that the Council can bestow and so should not be taken lightly. However, it is considered that the retirement of Nick Kent provides an excellent opportunity to celebrate his time at the Tricycle Theatre during which he has placed the theatre on the nation and international map out of proportion to its modest 235 seat size. One of the UK's longest serving and most respected artistic directors, he has run the theatre for 28 years and built it into a successful theatre known particularly for its political plays and culturally diverse work.
- 3.2 Accordingly, it is proposed to mark his retirement by the conferring of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough upon Nick Kent.
- 3.3 In anticipation that the Council would consider the proposal to confer Honorary Freedom of the Borough in this case, the matter has been the subject of prior consultation with the leaderships of the political groups represented on the Authority. Further to that consultation approaches have been made informally to Nicolas Kent to confirm that he would be a willing recipient of the proposed conferment, which he has indicated he would be both proud and privileged to accept.
- 3.4 It will be noted as a requirement of Section 249 (7) that if the Authority is to proceed with the conferment of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough a special meeting of the Council must be convened for the purpose. A formal vote on the object of conferring the honour must be recorded. The resolution must be passed by not less than two thirds of the members of council present and voting.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Section 249 (6) of the Act permits the Council to spend such reasonable sum it thinks fit for the purpose of conferring the title of honorary freeman of the borough. The costs for the award will be met from existing budgets.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Local Government Act 1972, section 249(5), permits the Council, by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, to confer the title of honorary freeman on persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent services to the borough.

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 There are no diversity implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

None

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