

# Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 22 August 2024

## Review of Edinburgh Award

Executive/routine  
Wards

Routine  
All

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Policy and Sustainability Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1.1 Agree to implement an approach similar to the Honours System of the United Kingdom for withdrawing civic awards as outlined in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of this report; and
  - 1.1.2 If recommendation 1.1.1 is agreed, request a report be prepared for the Council to amend the remit of the awards panel to consider rescinding civic awards.

**Paul Lawrence**

Chief Executive

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## Review of Edinburgh Award

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report responds to the actions agreed by the Council on 21 March 2024 in respect of reviewing awards granted to living people and amending the remit of the awards panel to consider withdrawing awards should the Council become aware of any award recipient being convicted of a criminal offence or be considered to have brought the award into disrepute.

### 3. Background

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#### Edinburgh Award Review

- 3.1 On 21 March 2024, the Council approved a [motion](#) by Councillor Staniforth to review the Edinburgh Award. The Council noted:
- 3.13.1 That the City of Edinburgh Council issues a number of awards to still-living people the most prestigious of which is the Edinburgh Award.
  - 3.1.2 That the Edinburgh Award is “to honour an outstanding individual who has made a positive impact on the city and gained national and international recognition for Edinburgh.”
  - 3.1.3 That this award includes physical elements – a name on a wall in the City Chambers and the award winner’s handprints in gold outside the City Chambers.
  - 3.1.4 That giving an award to still-living people always carries an element of risk as unknown activities could come to light or new activities conducted which brings the city into disrepute by association.
  - 3.1.5 That aside from a motion to full council there is no current established method of rescinding an award granted to a living person.
- 3.2 The Council believed that while ‘positive impact’ implies it, the Edinburgh Award should explicitly be given to those who uphold the city’s values.
- 3.3 The Council therefore agreed:
- 3.15.1 That a review should be conducted into awards granted to living people, especially the Edinburgh Award, to ensure that awards represent the values

of the city and to establish a process for rescinding said awards should a recipient later act in such a way as to bring the city into disrepute.

3.3.2 That a report on how this review will be conducted and the timescale for its delivery should be brought to the next Policy and Sustainability Committee.

## 4. Main report

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4.1 There are three awards which are currently bestowed by the Council on behalf of the city.

### **The Edinburgh Award**

4.2 In 2006, the Council received a [report](#) recommending the creation of a new civic award, The Edinburgh Award, with the criteria set out in the report. The Edinburgh Award was established in 2007.

4.3 In August 2023, to broaden the range of nominees received, the Council approved a change to the criteria which applies to the scheme as highlighted below:

4.3.1 Have been born in Edinburgh, have lived in the city for the past 12 months **or have a substantial association with Edinburgh;**

4.3.2 Have not previously been awarded The Freedom of the City;

4.3.3 Are not a previous winner of the Edinburgh Award; and

4.3.4 Are not a serving politician.

4.4 The Lord Provost chairs a panel to assess nominations against the agreed criteria and to decide on the award recipients. The panel includes the Leader of each political group on the Council, the Convener of Culture and Communities Committee, the Chief Executive of Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and the Chief Executive of the Edinburgh Voluntary Organisation Council. The decision of the panel is reported to the Council.

4.5 The recipient of the Award receives a Loving Cup and has their handprints reproduced on a flagstone in the City Chambers Quadrangle.

### **Civic Awards**

4.6 In addition to The Edinburgh Award, there are two other [Civic Awards](#) which can be bestowed on individuals:

4.6.1 Freedom of the City; and

4.6.2 William Y Darling Bequest for Good Citizenship.

4.7 The Freedom of the City recognises individuals who have distinguished themselves through their work or efforts, or to recognise the respect and high esteem in which they are held by the people of Edinburgh and is only granted in rare circumstances, following a motion to the Council which is approved by a 75% majority.

- 4.8 The William Y Darling Award recognises Good Citizenship and was instituted by the will of the late Sir William Y Darling, Lord Provost of Edinburgh (1941 – 1944).
- 4.9 The award is made to the citizen or citizens of Edinburgh who, in the opinion of the Council, has or have done most for the city's honour and welfare in the preceding year. Nominations are invited annually for consideration.

### **The Honours System of the United Kingdom**

- 4.10 The existing award criteria for the civic awards does not make reference to rescinding, forfeiting or withdrawing awards. Therefore, in progressing the actions agreed by the Council, officers sought to understand the arrangements by which other honours are rescinded.
- 4.11 The [Honours System of the United Kingdom](#) includes details of the reasons by which an honour can be withdrawn or 'forfeited', which includes criminal conviction and bringing the honours system into disrepute.
- 4.12 A decision to forfeit an honour can be based on events which pre-date the award or conduct which occurs after the award is made. Generally, it is not possible to withdraw an honour from someone who has died (although the Forfeiture Committee can consider specific cases and can issue a statement confirming the action which would have been taken had the individual been convicted).
- 4.13 The Forfeiture Committee will automatically consider cases where an individual:
- 4.13.1 Has been found guilty by the courts of a criminal offence and sentenced to a term of imprisonment of more than three months;
  - 4.13.2 Has been censured or struck off by the relevant regulatory authority or professional body, for actions or failures to act, especially which are directly relevant to the granting of the honour;
  - 4.13.3 Has been found guilty by the courts of a criminal offence covered by the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales), Sexual Offences Order 2008 (Northern Ireland) or Sexual Offences Act 2009 (Scotland);
  - 4.13.4 Has been found to have committed a sexual act which is listed in the Acts above following a 'trial of the facts'.
- 4.14 The Committee is not restricted to these four criteria, and any case can be considered where there is evidence to suggest retention of an honour would bring the honours system into disrepute.
- 4.15 However, the Committee is not an investigatory body and does not decide whether or not someone is guilty or innocent of a particular act. Rather, it reflects on the findings of official investigations and makes a recommendation on whether or not the honours system has been brought into disrepute.
- 4.16 Recommendations of forfeiture are made by the Committee through the Prime Minister to the King.
- 4.17 Honours can also be voluntarily forfeited.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 It is proposed that the remit of the awards panel be amended to include consideration of rescinding any civic award in line with the Honours System criteria (as outlined in paragraphs 4.13 and 4.14) and that the decision to rescind an award will require a 75% majority of the panel. It is also proposed that the panel to consider rescinding an award comprises the Lord Provost and political group leaders only.
- 5.2 Where the Council becomes aware of an issue, the Head of Legal Services will review the information available and prepare a report for the awards panel to consider. Following consideration, if required, a recommendation to rescind an award will be made to the Council.
- 5.3 Committee is asked to note that the nominations process for the Edinburgh Award 2024 recently closed. Nominations will now be assessed against the award criteria and a recommendation will be made on a recipient for the 2024 Award in due course. It is proposed that this process should not be impacted by the development of a procedure for withdrawing awards.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 An annual budget of £10,000 is allocated for the Edinburgh Award.

## **7. Equality and Poverty Impact**

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- 7.1 There are no equality or poverty impacts expected to arise from this report.

## **8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications**

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- 8.1 There are no climate and nature emergency considerations expected to arise from this report.

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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- 9.1 Nominations are sought from members of the public. A call for nominations is shared on the Council website, via press release and social media, and it is sent directly to a wide range of stakeholders, leading community representatives and business organisations.

## 10. Background reading/external references

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- 10.1 The Honours System of the United Kingdom recognises people from all walks of life and recognise and celebrate outstanding achievements. Honours are reserved for people:
- 10.1.1 Who have changed things especially by solid, practical achievement;
  - 10.1.2 Whose work has brought distinction to British life or enhanced the United Kingdom's reputation;
  - 10.1.3 In their area or activity.
- 10.2 A list of living recipients of the Freedom of the City is [published](#) on the Council website. Recipients of the Edinburgh Award are also [published](#) on the Council website.

## 11. Appendices

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None.