

Item No. 7.2	Classification: Open	Date: February 22 2006	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Civic Awards	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Chief Executive (Borough Solicitor)	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the standards committee recommends the nominations for Civic Awards made by the Southwark Civic Association as set out in a closed report distributed separately.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Civic Association was founded in 1996 to promote civic awareness, civic responsibility and civic pride within the Borough and currently the main focus of the Association is the annual Civic Award Scheme which they administer on behalf of the council. This enables the Award Scheme to remain and be seen to be non-political.
3. Civic Awards are formally made by the council, but most of the administration is carried out by the Civic Association on the council's behalf. The association makes recommendations to the council, through standards committee, for the granting of Civic Awards. The standards committee considered the nominations on February 6 2006 and agreed to recommend them to council assembly for approval.
4. Forty nomination forms for this year's Civic Awards were received. The Court of the Civic Association considered these nominations at the Civic Court Meeting on Saturday January 28 2006 and made recommendations to make awards as follows:
 - 16 "Letter of Commendation" Awards
 - 9 "Liberty of the Old Borough" Awards
 - 3 "Of the Year" Awards
5. The Civic Association feel that it is not appropriate to give reasons why individual nominations were not recommended for an award. Such reasons include:
 - insufficient time carrying out the work nominated for
 - paid employment for which other forms of recognition are available
 - had received a Civic Award in the past
6. The Awards Ceremony, followed by a reception is scheduled to take place on Saturday May 13 2006 at 11.00am at St George's Cathedral.
7. The working party, which consists of 6 members of the Civic Court continues to look at ways of promoting the Association and new membership and in

particular by working closer with the Chamber of Commerce and schools now that citizenship forms part of the curriculum.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. Financial and legal checks are undertaken on nominees regarding outstanding debt to the council. Agreement to these checks must be obtained from the nominees in order to comply with data protection legislation and this year's nominated individuals have been written to seeking their consent for these checks to be carried out. Once agreement has been received council records are checked to ascertain whether there is any reason not to grant an award (e.g. arrears owed to the council for which no arrangements have been made to repay, or where the council is taking legal action against the nominee).
9. Due to time constraints for this meeting not all authorisation letters have been received to undertake the financial and legal checks required. Therefore council assembly is asked to agree the list of nominations from the Civic Association, in principle, subject to satisfactory checks being undertaken. If, after these checks are undertaken any cause for concern arises, under delegated authority the borough solicitor will make a decision. All checks in 2005 were satisfactory.
10. Members of the council assembly have the final discretion whether or not to recommend an award and the level of award, which should be granted. However, the presumption is that the Civic Association nominations are agreed unless there are good reasons, as a matter of principle, not to make the award.
11. Concerns have been raised previously about the categories of civic awards and members may wish to consider, either through the standards committee or through the whips, setting these out in order that officers can raise matters directly with the Civic Association. The council has a subscription with the association and hosts meetings in Southwark attended by officer representatives.

Policy Implications

12. The contribution made by some nominees support and promote core council priorities (which were developed following community consultation) including: tackling poverty; making Southwark cleaner and greener; raising standards in schools; and cutting crime and fear of crime, and also to the corporate priority of promoting equalities.
13. The checks, which are carried out, are consistent with the council's corporate priority of "driving down debt". It would not normally be consistent with that priority for someone who has allowed a debt to the council to arise to be granted an award unless there is a good reason for the debt (e.g. a housing benefit delay) and/or they have acted responsibly in relation to that debt by making arrangements to pay the arrears.

Resource Implications

14. The Civic Association is largely self-funding, through subscriptions and donations. The awards are administered, the ceremony organised and the awards provided by the Civic Association. The council supports the awards by distributing application forms, displaying posters and providing administrative support to the selection and awards process. The council also provides support by posting out

invitations and providing the catering for the ceremony, which is met from existing budgets.

Community Impact Statement

15. The Civic Awards Scheme is open to nominations from people who live or “work” in the borough and as such is representative of a diverse spectrum of the community. The awards themselves normally provide recognition for voluntary work undertaken by individuals or organisations within their community.

Legal Implications

16. The making of awards falls within the general powers of well-being contained in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000.
17. The making of civil awards is reserved in the constitution of the standards committee.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Nominations from Civic Association	Member Services Town Hall Peckham Road	Sonia Sutton 020 7525 7303

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Deborah Holmes, Borough Solicitor	
Report Authors	Sonia Sutton, Mayor’s Civic Officer Ian Millichap, Constitutional Team Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	February 10 2006	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	Yes	Yes
Chief Finance Officer	No	No
List other Officers here	No	
Executive Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services	February 10 2006	