

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

19th November 2025

Report Title: Freedom of the Borough – Sir Ian Dudson KCVO CBE

Submitted by: Chief Executive

Portfolios: All

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes ☐	No ☒
To propose that Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council confers the honorary Freedom of the Borough upon Sir Ian Dudson KCVO CBE in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Staffordshire's civic life, business community, and voluntary sector.			
<u>Recommendation</u> That Council:- • Approves that the Mayor and Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Council in exercise of its powers under Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, and being desirous of expressing its admiration and appreciation of the long and continuing support given by Sir Ian Dudson KCVO CBE to the Borough and his outstanding contribution to the civic life of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme and the county of Staffordshire and as a mark of esteem, confer upon him the honorary FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH. • Approves the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Mayor, to make arrangements following this Extraordinary Council for a suitable ceremony for award of the Freedom of the Borough.			
<u>Reasons</u> Sir Ian Dudson KCVO CBE has made outstanding contributions to Staffordshire's civic life, business community, and voluntary sector and in recognition of this Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council wishes to confer the honorary Freedom of the Borough in recognition of this.			

1. Background

- 1.1** Sir Ian Dudson has served Staffordshire with distinction across multiple domains, most notably as Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire from 2012 to

2025. His tenure was marked by tireless dedication to public service, community engagement, and the promotion of Staffordshire's heritage and values.

- 1.2 Born in 1950, Sir Ian is a descendant of Richard Dudson, founder of the Dudson ceramics company in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, established in 1800. He joined the family business in 1973 and became Chief Executive in 1988, later serving as Non-Executive Chairman. Under his leadership, Dudson became a globally respected manufacturer of ceramic tableware for the hospitality industry
- 1.3 In light of Sir Ian Dudson's exceptional service to Staffordshire, his enduring connection to the local area, and his leadership in industry and civic life, it is recommended that Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council bestows upon him the Freedom of the Borough.
- 1.4 This honour would serve as a fitting tribute to a lifetime of dedication and achievement, and would reflect the borough's appreciation for his contributions to the community.

2. **Local Connections and Achievements**

2.1 Sir Ian's deep-rooted connection to the area is reflected in his educational and professional journey. He studied Ceramic Technology at North Staffordshire Polytechnic (now Staffordshire University), and has maintained strong ties with local institutions, including serving as Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council at Keele University from 2005 to 2012

2.2 His civic roles include:

- High Sheriff of Staffordshire (2010–2011)
- Deputy Lieutenant (2001–2012)
- Lord-Lieutenant (2012–2025)
- Chairman of Trustees of the Dudson Centre, a vital resource hub for voluntary organisations in Stoke-on-Trent
- Honorary President of Douglas Macmillan Hospice
- President of Scouting Staffordshire
- Member of Lichfield Cathedral Council

2.3 Sir Ian's philanthropic efforts and leadership in the voluntary sector have significantly enriched the social fabric of Staffordshire. His commitment to community service was further recognised through numerous honours, including:

- Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2002
- Commander and later Knight of the Order of St John
- Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO) in 2025 New Year Honours

2.4 Sir Ian celebrated with the Borough the year of the 850th Borough celebrations and helped unveil the Queen Elizabeth II statue in the Queens Garden in October 2024, in addition to the various visits to the Borough over his tenure as Lord Lieutenant.

3. Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that Council:-

- That the Council in exercise of its powers under Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and being desirous of expressing its admiration and appreciation of the long and continuing support given by Sir Ian Dudson KCVO CBE to the Borough and his outstanding contribution to the civic life of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme and the county of Staffordshire and as a mark of esteem does confer upon him the honorary FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH.
- Approves the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Mayor, to make arrangements following special Council for a suitable ceremony for award of the Freedom of the Borough.

4. Reasons

- 4.1** Sir Ian Dudson KCVO CBE has made outstanding contributions to Staffordshire's civic life, business community, and voluntary sector and in recognition of this Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council wishes to confer the honorary Freedom of the Borough in recognition of this.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1** No alternative options are relevant.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1** The statutory basis for the recommendation to confer the honorary title of "Freedom of the Borough" is Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 6.2** The process is compliant with the Council's protocol, requiring support from at least 10 members to trigger consideration by Full Council.
- 6.3** There are no financial, equality, or statutory risks flagged.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1** An equality impact assessment is not required as a result of this proposal.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1** There are no direct financial or resource implications arising from these proposals.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 9.1** There are no direct risks arising from these proposals.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

- 10.1** Conferring such Freedom of the Borough assists and covers a diverse range of activities which would fall within UN Sustainable Development Goals.



11. Key Decision Information

- 11.1** This is not a key decision.

12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

- 12.1** Not applicable.

13. List of Appendices

- 13.1** Nomination Paper – November 2025

14. Background Papers

- 14.1** None.

Appendix

Nomination for Freedom of the Borough Award

Dear Gordon,

Freedom Of the Borough for Sir Ian Dudson KCVO CBE

As you will be aware Sir Ian Dudson KCVO CBE has recently stood down as Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire. I have sought the support of 10 members to trigger the process as per the protocol to ask Full Council under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers a local authority to confer the 'Freedom of the Borough' to Sir Ian for his eminent service to the Borough over many years.

Sir Ian is a respected industrialist and public servant, serving as Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire since 2012. A descendant of the founder of the historic Dudson ceramics company, he has deep roots in the North Staffordshire pottery industry where the family business was established in 1800.

Educated in General Science at the University of Dundee and later in Ceramic Technology at North Staffordshire Polytechnic, Sir Ian led the Dudson company as Chief Executive and later as Non-Executive Chairman, helping it become a global name in ceramic tableware for the hospitality industry. His services to the ceramics sector earned him a CBE in 2002.

Sir Ian has a strong civic presence in Newcastle-under-Lyme over many years. Notably, he officially opened the Belong Care Village in the town in 2018. The site includes the restored Grade II-listed Maxims building, now home to the Belong Heritage Gallery, which showcases the town's rich cultural history. Last year he took part in the unveiling of the Queen Elizabeth II statue in Queens Gardens.

His broader public service includes roles as High Sheriff of Staffordshire (2010–2011), Deputy Lieutenant (from 2001), and Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council at Keele University (2005–2012)—a university located just outside Newcastle-under-Lyme. He also chairs the Dudson Centre, a hub for voluntary organisations in Stoke-on-Trent, and supports numerous Staffordshire-based charities and civic groups.

In recognition of his dedicated service to the Crown and community, Sir Ian was appointed Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO) in the 2025 New Year Honours.

Sir Ian would be an excellent recipient to add to the long line of distinguished people that have received Freedom of the Borough over the years.

Regards, Simon Tagg

Supporting Members:

Simon Tagg (on behalf of the Conservative Group)
Dave Jones (on behalf of the Labour Group)
Mayor Robert Bettley-Smith
Lynn Dean
Sue Beeston

Stephen Sweeney
Andy Fear
David Hutchison
Mark Holland
Gill Heesom