

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Civic Sub-Committee

Date of Meeting: 8th September 2015
Report of: Head of Governance and Democratic Services
Subject/Title: Council Flag Flying Policy

1.0 Report Summary

1.1 This report seeks clarification over a number of issues in relation to the Council's flag flying policy and asks the Sub Committee for a view on possible changes to that policy.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Constitution Committee be asked to review the Council's Flag Flying policy to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The Council's current policy in relation to the flying of flags was set in 2010. After five years it is suggested that it would be appropriate to review the policy in the light of operational and practical issues that have arisen, and to reflect current practices.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 Apart from the implications for the Flag Flying policy itself, there are no additional policy implications from reviewing or changing this policy.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications from reviewing or changing this policy.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 There are no risk management implications from reviewing or changing this policy.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 The current Council flag flying policy (attached as Appendix I) was set in 2010. The beginning of a new quadrennial period is an appropriate time for the policy to be reviewed.

10.2 Section 1 outlines those occasions when the Cheshire East flag should be flown at half-mast, including following the death of a serving Member, Honorary Alderman or Honorary Freeman. Current policy is that the flag remains at half-mast from the day the death occurs until sunset on the day of the funeral. On one occasion strict adherence to this policy resulted in the flag being flown at half-mast for over three weeks. On two other occasions it was flown at half-mast for over two weeks. On average the flag has been flown at half-mast for ten days following the death of a serving Member, Honorary Alderman or Honorary Freeman.

10.3 Councils and other public bodies have differing policies on the period of time during which flags should be flown at half-mast following the death of a current or former civic leader/dignitary; there is no one policy in operation across the country. It is recommended that it would be helpful for the Cheshire East policy to be made slightly more flexible, giving the Leader of the Council the discretion to vary the period of time flags are flown at half-mast on those occasions when a funeral is delayed.

10.4 Section 2 of the policy outlines those days when the Union flag should be flown; this includes the Queen's Birthday and her Official Birthday. Over the last three or so years the Union flag has been flown on the birthday of a number of other members of the Royal Family, including the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales. The Sub-Committee is asked for a view on whether such custom and practice should be regularised and included within the policy. The days in question (in addition to the days already listed in the policy) would be:

Birthday of Prince Charles 14 November
Birthday of Princess Ann 15 August
Birthday of Prince Andrew 19 February
Birthday of Prince Edward 10 March
Birthday of Prince William 21 June
Birthday of Prince George 22 July
Birthday of Prince Phillip 10 June

10.5 The Policy also provides for the Union flag to be flown at half-mast in the event of a soldier from the Mercian Regiment (1st Battalion) being killed whilst on active service. Since the policy was written, the Regiment has restructured. It is suggested that the policy be amended to cover the death, on active service, of any Mercian soldier.

- 10.6 Members of the Sub-Committee are asked if there are any other days on which they would see it as appropriate for the Union flag, or another specific flag, to be flown?
- 10.7 It is recommend that on all other occasions the Cheshire East Flag continue to be flown at Westfields, Macclesfield Town Hall and in Memorial Square, Crewe.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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