

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Constitution Committee

Date of Meeting: 17 September 2015
Report of: Head of Governance and Democratic Services
Subject/Title: Council Flag Flying Policy

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report, which follows a discussion at the Civic Sub Committee on 8 September 2015, makes recommendations in respect of a number of detailed issues in relation to the Council's flag flying policy and asks the Committee to make a number of amendments to the current policy which has been in operation since 2010.
- 1.2 The recommendations of the Civic Sub Committee have been incorporated into a proposed revised Flag Flying policy outlined in Appendix I.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Council Flag Flying Policy is amended in accordance with Appendix I of this report.

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 was set in 2010. The beginning of a new quadrennial period is an appropriate time for the policy to be reviewed.
- 10.2 The policy 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 Freemen. 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 Freemen.
- 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 The Policy also 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 Civic Sub Committee was of the view that custom and practise should be regularised. Revised lists of dates are proposed in Appendix I.
- 10.5 The Council has since 2009 flown the Union Flag at half-mast following the death on active service of a soldier from the 1st Battalion Mercian Regiment. The Sub Committee were of the view that to reflect changes within the Regiment, this should be changed to include the death, on active service of any Mercian soldier.

11.0 Access to Information

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

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Appendix 1

PROPOSED FLAG FLYING POLICY AT CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

1 General

The Cheshire East Borough Flag will be flown permanently at full mast on all Cheshire East establishments where a safe and serviceable flag pole exists. It will be the responsibility of the Property Team to ensure that the Cheshire East Flag is suitably maintained and flown.

The Cheshire East Flag will only be flown at half-mast on the death of the following, until sunset on the day of the funeral. On occasions when a funeral is delayed the Leader of the Council will have the authority to vary these timings.

A Member of the Council
An ex Mayor of the Borough
An ex Leader of the Council
An Honorary Freeman
An Honorary Alderman
A serving Member of Parliament of a Parliamentary Constituency within the Borough

Set out below are those occasions when an alternative flag will be flown at the administrative centres in Sandbach, Macclesfield and Crewe only.

2 Union Flag

The Union Flag will be flown full mast on the following days:

19 February - Birthday of Prince Andrew
Second Monday in March - Commonwealth Day
10 March - Birthday of Prince Edward
21 April - Birthday of Her Majesty the Queen
10 June - Birthday of Prince Phillip
13 June - Official birthday of Her Majesty the Queen
21 June - Birthday of Prince William
22 July - Birthday of Prince George
15 August - Birthday of Princess Ann, Princess Royal
Second Sunday in November - Remembrance Sunday
14 November - Birthday of Prince Charles

The Union Flag should be flown at half-mast on the day of the death of the following:

The Sovereign
or
The Mayor

The flag will remain half-mast until after the funeral (except in the case of the Sovereign when flags are hoisted right up from 11am to sunset on the Proclamation Day, and then lowered back to half-mast after sunset until the funeral).

In the case of deaths within the Royal Family (except the Sovereign), the flag will be flown on the day of the funeral and subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case.

The Union flag will be flown at half-mast following the death on active service of a serving member of the Mercian Regiment.

The Union Flag will be flown to support the Great British Team during the Olympics and Paralympics.

3 National Flag of England

St George's Day 23 April.

The National Flag will be flown to support the English Team during the Commonwealth Games and, at the discretion of the Leader of the Council, in support of other national teams.

4 Armed Forces

The following flags will be flown in support of the Armed Forces:

Army - 18 June (Waterloo)
Merchant Navy - 3 September (Red Ensign)
Royal Air Force - 15 September (Battle of Britain)
Royal Navy - 21 October (Trafalgar)
Armed Forces Week - June each year

5 Overseas Visitors

The relevant national flag will be flown when Cheshire East Borough formally receives visitors from overseas.

6 Mark of Respect

The Leader of the Council will determine when Cheshire East Council will fly its flags at half-mast as a mark of respect to express the sympathies of the Council in appropriate circumstances.

7 Other Occasions

Ad hoc requests to fly flags that are not covered by this policy will be determined by the Leader of the Council.