OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM: Granting of Freedom of Entry to the 1st Military Working Dog Regiment

SUPPORTING REPORT

Report From: The Chairman of Oakham Town Council, Cllr Martin Brookes

DATE OF MEETING: Tuesday, 10th November 2026

PURPOSE OF REPORT: For Decision

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1. Purpose of the Report

To consider a formal proposal to confer the civic honour of Freedom of Entry to the Town upon the 1st Military Working Dog Regiment, based at Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Rutland.

2. Background and Context

The 1st Military Working Dog Regiment is a vital part of the local defence community within Rutland. Kendrew Barracks is a key local employer and anchor institution.

Granting the Freedom of Entry is the highest ceremonial honour a town council can bestow upon a military unit. It symbolises the deep bond, mutual respect, and close relationship between the civilian population of Oakham and the armed forces stationed nearby.

3. Legal and Constitutional Framework

The legal mechanisms governing this power require strict adherence to standard local government acts:

Statutory Power: Town and parish councils derive their power to grant the Freedom of Entry from Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Extension of Powers: This statutory authority was extended to all town and parish councils under amendments made by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Previously, this capability was largely restricted to principal authorities (such as county, borough or city councils).

Voting Threshold: To exercise this power under Section 249, the resolution must be passed by a two-thirds majority of the council members present and voting at a meeting specially convened for this purpose.

Legal Implications: The distinction must be made that this is an entirely ceremonial status. It conveys no legal privileges, property rights, budgetary liabilities, or administrative powers.

4. Ceremonial Rights Conferred

Should the council pass the motion, the status ceremonially permits the 1st Military Working Dog Regiment the traditional right to march through the streets of Oakham on ceremonial occasions:

With bayonets fixed
With drums beating
With colours flying

5. Financial & Risk Implications

Financial: The act of passing the resolution carries no direct cost. Subsequent civic ceremonies, illuminated scroll productions, or parades will be costed independently and brought to a future Full Council meeting for budget allocation.

Risk Management: All future parades or physical events on the public highway or council land (such as Cutts Close) will require independent risk assessments, traffic management planning, and insurance checks.

6. Recommendations & Proposals

It is proposed that:

1. THAT pursuant to Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, Oakham Town Council hereby confers the honorary freedom of the town upon the 1st Military Working Dog Regiment based at Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Rutland, in recognition of their distinguished service and close ties to our community, thereby granting them the ceremonial Freedom of Entry to the Town of Oakham with the privilege to march through the town with bayonets fixed, drums beating, and colours flying.

2.The Town Clerk be authorised to formally communicate this resolution to the Commanding Officer at Kendrew Barracks.

3. A Working Group to be established at a subsequent meeting to coordinate the civic presentation ceremony and public parade timelines with representatives from the military unit.