

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

FLAG FLYING PROTOCOL

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for a new protocol in relation to the flying of flags at the Council's properties.

Information

2. In line with many public bodies, Nottinghamshire County Council recognises the importance and prestige of flying flags to honour certain dates and events.
3. As the Government's own guidance on the subject (*Plain English guide to flying flags, November 2012*) states:

'Flags are a very British way of expressing joy and pride – they are emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities and strengthen community cohesion'.

4. In line with the practice of various other County Councils, Nottinghamshire County Council chooses to fly a number of flags on both a daily and occasional basis at its main offices at County Hall. Currently the Flag of St. George, the Union Flag and the County Council's own flag are flown on a daily basis and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has recently clarified that all local authorities have discretion to take such an approach.
5. The Council also receives guidance and requests on an annual and an ad hoc basis from Government to fly the Union Flag, either at full mast (for example to mark certain Royal birthdays) or at half-mast (to honour specific events - for example in tribute to victims of terrorist attacks).
6. On occasions, the Council receives requests to fly flags on behalf of other organisations or to honour important historical dates or to pay tribute to recent events – for example the Council was requested by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to fly the Nottinghamshire flag on the Historic County Flags Day on 23 July 2019.
7. A protocol (attached at **Appendix A**) has been developed to help enable a consistent and transparent approach to dealing with this issue.

Other Options Considered

8. To continue to deal with these matters on an ad hoc basis but it is felt that the protocol offers greater clarity.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. The protocol will better enable a consistent and transparent approach to flying flags at County Hall.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

11. Should the Council need to purchase or replace a flag then the costs of these will be met through joint contributions from the relevant Democratic Services budget and the relevant corporate Facilities budget.
12. Should an event requiring hospitality be arranged to accompany the flying of a specific flag then this will be funded from the hospitality budget of the Chairman of the Council. Such costs do not require Committee approval but will be reported to the Governance & Ethics Committee as part of the ongoing Use of Resources by Councillors update reports.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That Policy Committee approves the Flag Flying Protocol attached as **Appendix A**.

Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE
Leader of the Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Derek Higton, Service Director, Place and Communities

Constitutional Comments (EP 09/03/2020)

13. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Policy Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (RWK 09/03/2020)

14. Any costs arising from the proposals detailed in the report will be funded from the existing revenue budget provision for Democratic Services and Corporate Facilities.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 'Plain English guide to flying flags' - Department for Communities and Local Government
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/15438/flying_flags_guide.pdf
- Various Flag Flying Policies of other County Councils
- Government guidance - 'Designated days for Union Flag flying'
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/designated-days-for-union-flag-flying>

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All