

Report for: Full Council 19 July 2021

Title: Appointment of Honorary Recorder of Haringey

Report authorised by : Fiona Alderman, Head of Legal and Governance

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Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non-Key Decision:** N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration.

- 1.1 Having a strong relationship between the judiciary and local partners, including the local authority is recognised as an effective way of supporting community safety. It is for this reason that the Lord Chief Justice recommends that effective relationships between the judiciary and civic institutions are a good way of establishing a means of communications to support, safer and stronger local communities. One means of recognising that such a relationship exists is through the appointment of an Honorary Recorder for the Borough. This report recommends that such an appointment is made.
- 1.2 Wood Green Crown Court is a prominent part of the Borough and deals with many high-profile criminal cases, delivering justice in London and beyond as well as many more local cases. His Honour Judge Lucas has been a Resident Judge at Wood Green Crown Court since 2014 and, in addition to his daily role, has made significant steps to develop closer links with the borough, including local people, businesses, and schools to help children and young people connect to the justice system in a positive way.
- 1.3 The appointee to the role of Honorary Recorder must be a serving circuit judge or recorder and it is proposed that Judge Noel Lucas be appointed to the position.
- 1.4 The Council was pleased to receive the suggestion from the Lead Presiding Judge of the South Eastern Circuit, Mr Justice Edis, to make this appointment, following the tireless efforts and continuous priority Judge Lucas has given to opening up the Crown Court to the community.
- 1.5 In accordance with The Lord Chief Justice's guidelines, the Chief Executive further consulted the Senior Presiding Judge for England and Wales, The Right Honourable Lady Justice Thirlwall, DBE, who advised that she happily endorsed the appointment of Judge Lucas as Honorary Recorder for Haringey, in recognition of his continuing positive connections to the local community.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To agree, that pursuant to Section 54 of the Courts Act 1971, His Honour, Judge Noel Lucas, be appointed to the office of Honorary Recorder of Haringey during his tenure as Resident circuit judge.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 As set out in paragraph 1.1 to establish links between the judiciary and civil life and support safer and stronger communities.

5. Alternative options considered.

None – The political groups were consulted prior to the meeting and agree with this proposed recommendation.

6. Background information

- 6.1 At each Crown Court centre a particular judge is appointed “Resident Judge” and leads the team of judges who sit there and provides the essential link between the judiciary and the administration.
- 6.2 Judge Lucas was involved in the prosecution of a high-profile child sexual exploitation case before he came to Wood Green Crown Court as its most senior judge. He has continued take forward further high-profile prosecutions, working collaboratively with the borough to ensure that the Crown Court was able to continue to operate with appropriate social distancing in place over the last 16 months and justice delivered in these difficult times.
- 6.3 Since the implementation of the Courts Act 1971 and the establishment of the Crown Court for England and Wales, Councils with Crown Courts have had the power to appoint resident judges as Honorary Recorder of their borough.
- 6.4 Historically, the Recorder of a town or city was a legal representative charged with the duties of dispensing justice at the Court. Currently, the role of Honorary Recorder is a purely civic and ceremonial one which carries no formal duties or powers. It is intended to further the link between a Council and the criminal courts, through involving the senior sitting judge in civic affairs and ceremonial events. In practice, this would see the Honorary Recorder attend civic events such as the Annual Council meeting and Remembrance Services.
- 6.5 According to the Lord Chief Justice’s Guidelines for the Appointment of Honorary Recorders, it has been the practice of most large city Councils to appoint the Resident Judge to be Honorary Recorder of the city during their tenure of office.

- 6.6 As head of the Judiciary, following the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, the Lord Chief Justice was keen to encourage those city and borough councils which have not made such appointments to consider doing so.
- 6.7 The guidelines also state that the involvement of the boroughs' Senior Resident Judge in civic affairs and events have been found to be valuable and are generally enjoyed and appreciated on both sides.
- 6.8 In accordance with the 1971 Act such an appointment is made to an individual so in the case of appointing Judge Lucas, it would last for the period he is in office, ending on 5th December 2022.

7. **Statutory Officers comments**

Finance

- 7.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the report as there are no defined tasks undertaken by the Honorary Recorder on behalf of the Council. Any costs associated with the Honorary Recorder would need to be met from existing budgetary provisions.

Legal

- 7.2 These are set out within the report. Section 54 of the Courts Act 1971 provides that "the Council of a borough shall have power to appoint a person to be honorary recorder of the borough. Any person appointed must be a circuit judge or recorder.

8. **Use of Appendices**

None

9. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

The Lord Chief Justice's guidelines for the appointment of Honorary Recorders