

Report for: Full Council 18 November 2024

Title: Appointment of Honorary Recorder of Haringey

Report authorised by : Fiona Alderman, Assistant Director 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 and community relations. 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.
- 1.2 Judge Noel Lucas was appointed by the Council in July 2021 as the Council's first Honorary recorder. His 8 year term as a as Resident Judge (RJ) at Wood Green Crown Court came to end in December 2023.
- 1.3 The Council places on record it's thanks to Judge Noel Lucas. The expansion of the court from a 10-court centre to a 16-court centre and the significant improvement in the performance of Wood Green Crown Court over the past 8 years has resulted in the Resident Judge role being elevated to a Senior Circuit Judge role and means Wood Green Crown Court is now one of the more senior Crown Courts in both London and in the UK.
- 1.4 It is proposed to appoint his Honor Judge John Dodd KC as the Honorary Recorder and continue partnership with Wood Green Crown Court and the judiciary. Judge John Dodd KC was called to the Bar (Gray's Inn) in 1979 and took Silk in 2006. He was appointed as a recorder in 2000 and as a circuit judge in 2012. The Lady Chief Justice of England and Wales, the Right Honourable the Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill has appointed His Honour Judge Dodd KC to be a Senior Circuit Judge, Resident Judge based at Wood Green Crown Court, with effect from 10 June 2024.

- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 The appointee to the role of Honorary Recorder must be a serving circuit judge or recorder and it is proposed that his Honor Judge John Dodd KC be appointed to the position.
- 1.7 The Council was pleased to receive the nomination from the Royal Courts of Justice to make this appointment and maintaining this vital connection with Wood Green Crown Court.
- 1.8 In accordance with The Lord Chief Justice's guidelines, the Chief Executive further consulted the Senior Presiding Judge for England and Wales, who endorsed the appointment of Judge John Dodds KC as Honorary Recorder for Haringey.

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 John Dodd KC, 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

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 John Dodd KC is an experienced Judge and recently managed a number of high-profile local cases.
- 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 Dodds it would last for the period he is in office.

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