
Council

18 May 2017

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, Councillor A Khan

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected:

N/A

Title:

Appointment of Honorary Recorder for the City of Coventry

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

To appoint a new Honorary Recorder for the City of Coventry following the forthcoming retirement of the current holder of the role, His Honour Judge Griffith-Jones.

Recommendations:

Council is recommended to appoint His Honour Judge Andrew Lockhart QC to the role of Honorary Recorder for the City Of Coventry with effect from 1st July 2017.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 18 May 2017

Report title: Appointment of Honorary Recorder for the City of Coventry

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 With effect from 30 June 2017 the current Honorary Recorder for the City of Coventry, His Honour Judge Richard Griffith-Jones, retires from this role as a result of his retirement as a Circuit Judge at Coventry Crown Court.
- 1.2 The position of Recorder has a long history and the position dates back to 1345 when the City of Coventry was granted a Royal Charter by King Edward III. During the mediaeval period, the duties of the Recorder were principally acting as general legal advisor to the City, having responsibility for keeping accurate records, and seeing that true judgements were made. It was not until 1882 that it became a requirement for a Recorder to be a qualified lawyer.
- 1.3 In 1971 the Courts Act brought about substantial changes to the Court system and abolished the Quarter Sessions. With the abolition of these Courts, the formal role of the Recorder ceased. The Act provided that all part-time Judges could be known as Recorders, but these would have no affiliation to any particular geographical area by virtue of their appointment. As a result of concerns expressed over the loss of this historic role, the Government changed the proposed legislation so as to allow for the appointment of Honorary Recorders. Only a Circuit Judge or a Recorder is qualified to hold office as an Honorary Recorder.
- 1.4 The City Council appointed its first Honorary Recorder in August 1971 and there have been seven holders of the post since that date. The post is mainly ceremonial in nature, but it does allow for the historic links between the City and the judiciary to be maintained. The Honorary Recorder supports the Lord Mayor by attending functions such as the Annual Meeting of the City Council, Holocaust Memorial Day, Freeman's Guild Annual Service, Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Sunday, Royal visits and is invited to other city-wide events.
- 1.5 His Honour Judge Richard Griffith-Jones was appointed to the post in 2011, but will relinquish it with effect from 30 June 2017 as a result of his retiring from the Judicial Bench.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The link between the Judiciary and the City is an important one and one which should be maintained. It is, therefore, proposed that a new Honorary Recorder should be appointed. It is custom for the City Council to offer the position to a Circuit Judge or Recorder serving on the judicial circuit which serves the City. As a result, an informal approach has been made to His Honour Judge Andrew Lockhart QC who will become the Senior Circuit Judge in Coventry. His Honour Judge Andrew Lockhart QC has indicated that he would be willing to accept the post of Honorary Recorder if it were to be offered to him.
- 2.2 Council is therefore recommended to appoint His Honour Judge Andrew Lockhart QC to the role of Honorary Recorder for the City Of Coventry with effect from 1 July 2017.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 No formal consultation has taken place on the basis that it is custom for the post of Honorary Recorder to be offered to the Senior Circuit Judge serving on the judicial circuit which serves the City.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The current Honorary Recorder, His Honour Judge Richard Griffith-Jones, retires from the judiciary on 30 June 2017. Subject to the approval of the recommendation, His Honour Judge Andrew Lockhart QC would become his successor, taking over the role on 1 July 2017.

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications relating to this role. The post carries no remuneration as the duties are entirely honorary in nature.

5.2 Legal implications

The Court Act 1971 empowers the City to appoint a Court Recorder or Circuit Judge to be the Honorary Recorder of the City. The City Council has always exercised its power under the Act and invited the Resident Judge for Coventry and Warwickshire Crown Court to be Honorary Recorder.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Other than to maintain the links between the City and the judiciary which creates a safe and secure environment for the city, the role of Honorary Recorder is ceremonial in nature and classified as an 'office of dignity' supporting the Lord Mayor and the City Council at functions and events hosted by the City Council.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There is no risk associated with this appointment.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equalities / EIA

There are no equalities implications.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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