

Council

24 June, 2025

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities - Councillor AS Khan

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Law and Governance

Ward(s) affected:

N/A

Title: Appointment of Honorary Recorder for the City of Coventry

Is this a key decision? No

Executive summary:

This report seeks approval to appoint a new Honorary Recorder for the City of Coventry following the end of term of office of the current holder of this role, His Honour Judge Andrew Lockhart KC.

Recommendations:

Council is recommended to appoint Her Honour Judge Kristina Montgomery KC to the role of Honorary Recorder for the City of Coventry with effect from 1 July, 2025.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers: None

Other useful documents: None

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

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

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 24 June, 2025

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

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The current Honorary Recorder for the City of Coventry, His Honour Judge Andrew Lockhart KC, is ending his term of office.
- 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 medieval 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 eight 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. The Honorary Recorder also Chairs the Good Citizen Award Advisory Panel and is invited to present this Award to recipients at Council meetings.
- 1.5 His Honour, Judge Andrew Lockhart KC was appointed to the post in 2017 but will relinquish it following the end of his term of office.

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 Her Honour Judge Kristina Montgomery KC, who has been appointed as Resident Judge at Coventry & Warwick Crown Court for a period of four years commencing from 1 July 2025 and she has indicated that she would be willing to accept the post of Honorary Recorder if it were to be offered to her.

- 1.1 Council is therefore recommended to appoint Her Honour Judge Kristina Montgomery KC to the role of Honorary Recorder for the City of Coventry with effect from 1 July, 2025.

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 a 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 Andrew Lockhart KC, is ending his term of office and, subject to the approval of the recommendation, Her Honour Judge Kristina Montgomery would become his successor, taking over the role on 1 July, 2025.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance

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.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

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. The role contributes to maintaining civic pride in the City.

How is risk being managed?

There is no risk associated with this appointment.

6.2. What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.3. Equalities / EIA?

There are no equalities implications.

6.4. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

No implications

6.5. Implications for partner organisations?

The role of Honorary Recorder maintains the links between the City Council and the Judiciary which creates a safe and secure environment for the City.

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