

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE – 11 JANUARY 2017

REPORT OF THE TRI-BOROUGH DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES

HONORARY RECORDER OF THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

This report asks the Committee to note (i) the resignation of His Honour Judge McGregor-Johnson, QC as Resident Judge at Isleworth Crown Court and therefore as Honorary Recorder of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea; and (ii) approve the appointment of his replacement as Resident Judge, His Honour Judge Edmunds, QC, as the Borough's Honorary Recorder.

FOR DECISION

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Courts Act 1971 gave Borough Councils the power to appoint a circuit judge or a recorder of the Crown Court as Honorary Recorder of the Borough concerned.
- 1.2 Since the closure of Knightsbridge Crown Court in the 1990s there has not been a Crown Court in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Those cases where the Council is the prosecuting authority are currently heard at Isleworth Crown Court.
- 1.3 The Lord Chief Justice has issued guidelines for the appointment of Honorary Recorders. The guidelines advise that it has been the practice of most city councils to appoint the resident judge to be Honorary Recorder of the city, thereby continuing the link between the city and its criminal court which had existed throughout the history of the courts of quarter sessions abolished by the 1971 Act. The guidelines also advise that the involvement of the city's senior resident judge in civic affairs and events have been found to be valuable and are genuinely enjoyed and appreciated on both sides.

2. HONORARY RECORDER

- 2.1 At its meeting in October 2011 the Council agreed to appoint H.H. Judge Richard McGregor-Johnson, the resident judge at Isleworth Crown Court, as the Borough's Honorary Recorder.
- 2.2 Notification has been received from the Judicial Office of the Royal Courts of Justice of the forthcoming retirement of H.H. Judge McGregor-Johnson from the post of Resident Judge. The letter is appended to this report.

3. APPOINTMENT

- 3.1 The appended letter advises of the appointment of H.H. Judge Edmunds, QC as Resident Judge at Isleworth Crown Court with effect from 6 February.
- 3.2 H.H. Judge Edmunds (56) lives in Twickenham. He was called to the Bar in 1983 and took Silk in 2006. He was appointed as an Assistant Recorder in 1998, as a Recorder in 2000 and as a Circuit Judge in 2009.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Administration Committee is asked to:
- (i) advise the Council of the retirement of H.H. Judge McGregor-Johnson as Resident Judge and therefore Honorary Recorder of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea;
 - (ii) ask the Council to place on record its appreciation of the duties undertaken by H.H. Judge McGregor-Johnson during his period of tenure; and
 - (iii) seek the Council's approval to appoint H.H. Judge Edmunds as the Borough's Honorary Recorder with effect from 6 February 2017.

FOR DECISION

TASNIM SHAWKAT
TRI-BOROUGH DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES

Background papers: The Lord Chief Justice's guidelines for the appointment of Honorary Recorders.

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