

Report to Council

Ward(s) affected: n/a

Report of: Strategic Director: Transformation and Governance

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# Appointment of Honorary Recorder

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following the formal retirement of His Honour Judge Robert Fraser MVO as a Circuit Judge (and Resident Judge at Guildford Crown Court) at the end of June 2023, the Council is requested to consider the appointment of Her Honour Judge Patricia Lees, who is Judge Fraser's successor as Resident Judge, as the Honorary Recorder for the Borough of Guildford, with immediate effect.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To appoint, with immediate effect, Her Honour Judge Patricia Lees, Resident Judge at Guildford Crown Court, as the Honorary Recorder for the Borough of Guildford.

## 3. Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1 To maintain the historic appointment of an Honorary Recorder for the Borough.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 Over a period of many centuries, a Recorder was appointed as the presiding Judge for Guildford Quarter Sessions. Over the years, many notable Queen's/King's Counsel had held the position of Recorder of Guildford, including Sir Edward Marshall Hall, James Cassells and Derek Curtis-Bennett.
- 4.2 Quarter Sessions were abolished in 1972, but the former Borough Council decided to exercise the power under Section 54 of the Courts Act 1971 to appoint an Honorary Recorder of Guildford.
- 4.3 His Honour Judge Richard Vick was the first appointee to the post and held the position until his death in 1997. In May 1998, the Council appointed His Honour Judge John Bull QC DL, the then Resident Judge of Guildford Crown Court, to the post, a position he held until October 2010, when His Honour Judge Christopher Critchlow's appointment as Honorary Recorder came into effect. His Honour Judge Fraser succeeded Judge Critchlow as Honorary Recorder in July 2017 until his retirement as resident judge in June 2023.
- 4.4 Her Honour Judge Patricia Lees was appointed formally as the Resident Judge at Guildford Crown Court with effect from 18 July 2023. She was first appointed to the South-Eastern Circuit Bench in 2009. A short biography of HHJ Lees is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

## **5. The Office of Honorary Recorder**

- 5.1 The office of Honorary Recorder is purely an honorary role and does not entail the post-holder in any specific duties although the Recorder usually attends and is involved with civic ceremonial events such as the Annual Council meeting, Remembrance Services, etc.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this proposal.

**7. Legal Implications**

7.1 The Council is empowered by Section 54 of the Courts Act 1971 to appoint an Honorary Recorder.

**8. Human Resource Implications**

8.1 There are no human resource implications associated with this proposal.

**9. Background papers**

None

**10. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Short biography of Her Honour Judge Patricia Lees