

Annex B



18 August 2009

Mick Elliot
Director Culture
DCMS
2-4 Cockspur Street
London
SW1

Dear Mick

Chair of Arts Council England, London

You asked my view on the Mayor's nomination of Veronica Wadley to chair the London Regional Council of Arts Council England and to serve as a member of National Council.

I am unhappy with this nomination for the following reasons:

- A process was followed with independent participation by Sir David Durie, a member of the GLA standards committee, the Mayor's culture adviser and me. The original agreement was that the panel would select two names and the mayor would make his choice. This was done in order to ensure that this appointment would be made to standards of probity equivalent to Nolan, and so in line with other appointments to National Council.
- We interviewed five shortlisted candidates. One was eliminated at once. Three were deemed by all of us to be very strong across the range of skills and experience required. Sir David Durie described the fifth candidate, Veronica Wadley, as not meeting the standard. I said she was a person with strong general skills but almost no arts credibility and should therefore be eliminated. Munira argued hard for Veronica but did not move either Sir David or me from our view that she was manifestly the least qualified of the four. I thought her lack of arts experience or knowledge meant she would not do the best job for London and would make an inadequate contribution to National Council.
- I left the interview process with the impression that the Mayor would see the three appointable candidates (I agreed to put forward three rather than two in order to give the mayor more choice)- any of whom would make a credible chair of London and contribute in arts terms to National Council.
- I was therefore shocked to be told that Mayor was only seeing two of the appointable candidates plus Veronica. I wrote to him expressing unhappiness

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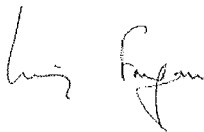
and spoke to him. He agreed to see the three appointable candidates plus Veronica.

- He then rang me to tell me that he wanted to appoint Veronica because she gave a good interview. He also said she agreed with his policy on music in schools and that she had some good ideas on private fundraising. Neither of these is at the forefront of criteria for the job.
- I left him in no doubt I was unhappy with this decision but he said he was writing to the Secretary of State anyway.

So we are left with a due process that was not followed, a candidate who was manifestly less qualified than three of her competitors and three distinguished candidates put through a process that seems to have had questionable validity. My conclusion is that the Mayor's intended appointment is based on reasons other than selection of the best candidate for the post. Had the appointment been run to the standard applied to other appointments on Council Veronica would not have been seen by the Mayor.

This unhappy story illustrates that the system of having the London chair and member of National Council appointed by a different mechanism from other Council members is fundamentally flawed. I would urge the Secretary of State to reconsider this arrangement which seems to mean that one member of National Council is not chosen on merit. I think we all agree that National Council members need to be there on merit only. That is at the core of the arms length principle.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Forgan', written in a cursive style.

Dame Liz Forgan
Chair

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3 AUG 2009

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Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw MP
Secretary of State
Department for Culture Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
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Date: 31 JUL 2009

Dear Ben

Appointment of the Chair of the London Region of the Arts Council of England

I wish to appoint Veronica Wadley as Chair of the London Region of the Arts Council of England for a four-year period from 1 October 2009.

I would first like to pay tribute to the sterling work Lady Sue Woodford Hollick has performed in this office over the last nine years. Sue leaves the arts in the capital in a healthier state than she found them and I am very grateful to her for that.

I am sure you will agree with me that we are very fortunate to have found someone of the calibre of Veronica Wadley to replace Sue. Her commitment to the arts and her understanding of London will be vital in the face of severe challenges – particularly financial – which we shall encounter going forward. In the interview Veronica made a persuasive case for funding the arts, and balancing excellence and access. She understood most clearly my priorities, including music education, and she was also the most creative candidate in terms of promoting the arts and culture across all the boroughs in London.

Veronica was chosen from a strong field following a two-stage interview process. On the panel for the first stage were the Chair of Arts Council England, Dame Liz Forgan and my arts and culture advisor, Munira Mirza. Also present was someone independent of the bodies involved in the recruitment process, Sir David Durie (who among other things is now a member of the GLA's Standards Committee). I conducted the second stage along with the GLA's Deputy Chief Executive, Jeff Jacobs.

I feel confident that Veronica will be an asset to the Arts Council in the years ahead.

Yours ever,



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

