

Dear all,

I am going to stand down as chair of the Safer Neighbourhood Panel at the upcoming meeting on 27th May. I realise with some surprise that I have been chair of the SNP for almost 5 years! It's therefore definitely time for a change and recent events now make this a necessity.

As you probably know, in the local elections on 6th May, Rupert Perry, Charlynn Pullen and I were (re)elected to the Council to represent Caledonian Ward. The election resulted in a significant change in political control with 35 Labour Councillors elected to just 13 Lib Dems. As a result, Labour has formed an administration and I have been appointed to the 8 member Executive which has direct responsibility for running most of the Council's affairs. I have the portfolio covering regeneration, planning and leisure.

The Metropolitan Police Authority recommends that Safer Neighbourhood Panels are resident chaired and that such a chair is not directly associated with one of the main partners involved in each SNP. I have always resisted the interpretation that a Councillor automatically "represents" the Council and, whilst I was an Opposition member, this was absolutely my view. Now that I am an Executive member, things have definitely changed.

Be assured that I and one of my other ward colleagues will remain active members of the Safer Neighbourhood Panel over the duration of our current 4 year term in office. For me personally, one advantage to being an Executive Councillor is that I become a full-time local politician and therefore can commit a significant amount of my time to local and Ward matters. Having an executive responsibility also brings an authority within the Town Hall that, as a mere opposition Councillor, I never had. I therefore expect to be able to make things move much faster and with greater ease than in the previous 4 years.

Having thought carefully about the consequences and, having consulted a number of SNP members, I want to recommend that Lisa Tang assumes the role of SNP chair. Whilst it is conceivable that some other members of the SNP might want to contest this recommendation but I have certainly not had any inkling to that effect. The proposal that Lisa should assume this role has been met with approval from those people that I have consulted. Lisa is a very active member of this community and takes a leading role in several valuable initiatives in the ward including Cally Arts, Friends of Regents Canal and the Thornhill Bridge Community Gardeners. I very strongly recommend that Lisa takes the chair of the SNP and very much hope you will agree.

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