



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Report title

## Appointment of Interim Director of Communications

Report to	Date
London Fire Commissioner	21 September 2021

Report by	Report number
Assistant Director People Services	LFC-0600

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I agree the recommended decision below.

**Andy Roe**  
London Fire Commissioner

This decision was  
remotely signed on  
Date 21/09/2021

### Summary

In January 2021, the Director for People determined that the current communications function should be subject to a formal review which would determine its long-term structure and leadership requirements and it was recommended that this review be led by an external interim appointment. An interim Director of Communication was appointed in February 2021 and left the LFB in August 2021. A further interim is required while the longer term arrangements are determined.

### Recommended decision

That the London Fire Commissioner appoints Lorraine Homer as the Interim Director of Communications at a maximum cost of [REDACTED] per day for a period of 6 months, at a total cost of up to [REDACTED].

### Background

1. Recruitment to this post via agency began in August 2021 with Gatenby Sanderson utilised to identify candidates. The LGRP (Local Government Resourcing Partnership) Framework was used to source applicants for this senior appointment, but the successful candidate will be engaged by the LFC via its interim labour supplier, Reed.
2. Five candidates were considered at interview, by a panel consisting of the Director for People, the London Fire Commissioner (LFC), Mayoral Director for Communications, and Fiona Twycross, Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience. Candidates also took part in a stakeholder panel with a

range of members of staff from the communications function, culture change and operations, with their feedback shared with the interview panel for final decision.

### **Recommendation of the panel**

3. The panel's recommendation was that Lorraine Homer is appointed as Interim Director of Communications at a cost of [REDACTED] per day for a period of 6 months, at a total cost of up to [REDACTED]. The candidate will be working four days per week, however the figure of [REDACTED] is based on 5 days a week to enable flexibility to change the arrangement to full time.

### **Finance comments**

4. The costs of the interim are to be met from a combination of the Communications Department budget, using the residual balance on the budget for the Assistant Director, Communications. The forecast cost for the interim director is in excess of the budget allocation for this post, and this overspend will be managed within the overall corporate underspend. The position will be kept under review as part of the regular financial position reporting, and the budget reviewed as a permanent appointment is made in due course.

### **Workforce comments**

5. The respective Representative Bodies have been consulted on the proposals for a permanent director of communications, and the appointment of a further interim.

### **Legal comments**

6. Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that the London Fire Commissioner is the fire and rescue authority for Greater London. Section 327A (5) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 requires the Commissioner to secure that the London Fire and Rescue Service is efficient and effective. This means the personnel, services and equipment secured by the London Fire Commissioner for the purposes of carrying out the Commissioner's functions.
7. In accordance with Section 5A Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004), the London Fire Commissioner, being a 'relevant authority', may do 'anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying out of any of its functions'. This is a matter coming within that power.

### **Sustainability implications**

8. There are no sustainability implications.

### **Equalities implications**

9. The London Fire Commissioner and decision-takers are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 of the Equality Act 2010) when exercising his functions and taking decisions.
10. It is important to note that consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty is not a one-off task. The duty must be fulfilled before taking a decision, at the time of taking a decision, and after the decision has been taken.
11. The protected characteristics are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirements to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), Race (ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), Religion or belief (including lack of belief), Sex, and Sexual orientation.

12. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the LFC, in the exercise of all his functions (i.e. everything he does), to have due regard to the need to:
  - (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
  - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
  - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
  
13. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
  - (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic;
  - (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
  - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
  
14. The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
  
15. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
  - (a) tackle prejudice, and
  - (b) promote understanding.
  
16. Gatenby Sanderson, who were asked to identify candidates have a track record of attracting candidates from a diverse background using targeted networks and online advertising. In addition, the LFC reached out to networks for underrepresented groups through the external members of the Togetherness Board and the Chair of the Audit Panel.
  
17. There is no evidence of the process having any adverse impact on those applicants with protected characteristics although the Brigade would recognise that further ongoing work is needed in ensuring that the senior management group represents the wider workforce and community that LFB services.