

Appointment of Director of Communications

London Fire Commissioner

26 October 2022

Report by:

Kate Bonham Assistant Director, People Services

Report classification: For decision

For publication

I agree the recommended decision below.



Andy Roe

London Fire Commissioner

Date This decision was remotely signed on 04 November 2022

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

On 24 January 2022, the LFC approved the creation of a permanent Director of Communications post (LFC-0627). Following the departure of Lorraine Homer in June 2022, Helen Coleman was appointed as interim on 21 June 2022 (LFC-0718). A full external recruitment campaign to source a permanent candidate is now complete.

Recommended decision(s)

That the London Fire Commissioner appoints Helen Coleman as the permanent Director for Communications.

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 On 24 January 2022, the LFC approved the creation of a permanent Director of Communications post (LFC-0627). Following the departure of Lorraine Homer in June 2022, Helen Coleman was appointed as interim on 21 June 2022 (LFC-0718).
- 1.2 Recruitment for a permanent candidate began in June 2022. Following a tender process, IRP Advisors (trading as Odgers Berndtson), also known as Berwick Partners were successful as the supplier for sourcing the permanent Director for Communications.
- 1.3 56 applications for the permanent vacancy were received and reviewed with 6 candidates being shortlisted by the London Fire Commissioner (LFC), Director for People, Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience and the Mayoral Director of Communications. 4 Candidates were interviewed by a panel consisting of the London Fire Commissioner (LFC), Director for People, Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience and the Head of Media of the Mayor of London's Press Office. Candidates also took part in a stakeholder panel with a range of staff across directorates and in a diversity and inclusion exercise.

2 Recommendation from the panel

- 2.1 The panel's recommendation is that Helen Coleman is appointed as Director for Communications.

3 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 3.1 The appoint of a permanent Director of Communications will provide the LFC with permanent and stable leadership of the communications function and support the LFC to deliver its strategic objectives and manage the wide-ranging communications challenges

4. Equality comments

- 4.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience are required to have due regard to the

Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when taking decisions. This in broad terms involves understanding the potential impact of policy and decisions on different people, taking this into account and then evidencing how decisions were reached.

- 4.2** 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.
- 4.3** 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.
- 4.4** The Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision-takers in the exercise of all their functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 4.5** 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:
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic.
 - 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.
 - 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.
- 4.6** 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.
- 4.7** 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:
- tackle prejudice
 - promote understanding.
- 4.8** Odgers Berndtson were asked to identify candidates who have a track record of attracting candidates from a diverse background using targeted networks and online advertising.
- 4.9** 56 candidates applied and of these, 46 applicants submitted their diversity data. 47% declared themselves as male and 53% declared themselves as female. 83% of the candidates stated their ethnic group was white, with 17% candidates stating to be from an ethnic minority. Out of the 4 candidates that progressed to final interview 50% were female, and 25% of candidates stated that they were from an ethnic minority.
- 4.10** There is no evidence of the process having any adverse impact on those applicants with a protected characteristic although the Brigade would recognize that further ongoing work is needed in ensuring that the senior management group represents the wider workforce and community that the LFC services.

5 Workforce comments

5.1 The respective Representative Bodies have been consulted on the creation of the permanent post and informed of the outcome of the recruitment process.

6. Sustainability comments

6.1 There are no sustainability comments.

7. Procurement comments

7.1 A full procurement process was undertaken to appoint an agency to source the permanent candidate

8. Communications comments

8.1 The appointment of the candidate will be communicated to the communications department and then to all staff.

9. Financial comments

9.1 Finance comments relating to the creation of a permanent Director of Communications are detailed in LFC decision LFC-0627. There is no additional cost associated with the appointments being proposed with the salary to be set within the range of the TMGA* grade of £115,532 - £139,066.

10. Legal comments

10.1 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.

10.2 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.

List of appendices

| Appendix | Title | Open or confidential* |
|----------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1 | None | |
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Part two confidentiality

Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part Two form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a Part Two form: **NO**

Originating officer declaration

Reporting officer to confirm the following by using 'x' in the box:

Reporting officer

[Report author] has drafted this report and confirms the following:

1. Assistant Director/Head of Service

Kate Bonham has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to Board for consideration

x

2. Advice

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal:

Kathryn Robinson, Legal Advisor, on behalf of General Counsel (Head of Law and Monitoring Officer).

Adrian Bloomfield Financial Advisor, on behalf of the Chief Finance Officer.

x