

REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

DATE: 26TH JANUARY 2024

REPORT TITLE: APPOINTMENT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES (SECTION 73 OFFICER)

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND ASSETS

<u>Key Decision</u>	No
<u>Purpose of Report</u>	To note the Employment and Appointment Committee’s decision to appoint Rachel Musson as the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority’s Strategic Director of Resources (and Section 73 Officer).
<u>Recommendation</u>	That Committee notes the Employment and Appointment Committee’s decision to appoint Rachel Musson as the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority’s Strategic Director of Resources (and Section 73 Officer).
<u>Voting arrangements</u>	The recommendation in this paper is for noting by the Committee, so no vote is required.
<u>Publication Requirements</u>	For publication.

Background

1. Under Section 73 of the Local Government Act 1985 the Combined Authority is required to appoint an Officer to be responsible for the proper administration of its financial affairs. In the Combined Authority, this role is discharged by the Strategic Director of Resources.

Key Considerations

2. Following the departure of the previous substantive Section 73 Officer in March 2022, the role has been filled on an interim basis, initially by Richard Ennis who is now Interim Chief Executive, then subsequently by Stephen Fitzgerald, who left the Combined Authority at the end of August 2023.
3. Rachel Musson took on the Section 73 responsibility on an interim basis on 29th August 2023. This interim appointment was subject to a separate paper to the 6th

October meeting of the Combined Authority Committee. Ms Musson subsequently applied for the permanent role of Strategic Director of Resources, during the recent national recruitment process.

4. The recruitment process included an officer-level assessment centre on 6th September 2023, chaired by the Interim Chief Executive and with representatives from the Unitary Authorities. This was then followed by a formal meeting of the Employment and Appointments Committee on 16th October 2023, at which Ms Musson was interviewed alongside one other candidate by the Metro Mayor and the other Members of the Committee (Cllr Claire Young and Cllr Kye Dudd standing in for Mayor Marvin Rees. Cllr Kevin Guy sent his apologies and did not send a substitute).
5. The unanimous decision of the Employment and Appointments Committee was to appoint Ms Musson as the Strategic Director of Resources (Section 73 Officer).
6. The Constitution makes it a function of the Employment and Appointments Committee to appoint Directors, and there is no legal requirement for appointments (other than the Head of Paid Service) to be confirmed by the Combined Authority Committee which, of course, comprises the same members as the Employment and Appointments Committee. However, in line with established practice, this report is brought to the Combined Authority Committee as a courtesy for noting.

Key Risks

7. The Combined Authority is required to appoint a Section 73 Officer. The appointment of Ms Musson satisfies this statutory obligation.

Financial Implications

8. The financial implications associated with this appointment can be covered from within the existing revenue budget for 2023/24. This statutory role is included in the budget on an ongoing basis.

Legal Implications

9. Dealt with in the body of this report.

Human Resources Implications

10. A thorough recruitment process was conducted, concluding in the appointment of the successful candidate. The ratification of the appointment will ensure that the Authority can continue to meet its statutory requirement to employ a Statutory Section 73 Officer.

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