



**The Commissioner for
Public Appointments**

Rt Hon Peter Riddell CBE
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Julie James AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government

14th August 2019

Dear Julie James

Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales

Thank you for your letter regarding the vacant Chair post on the board of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

I understand that two competitions have been run to identify a suitable replacement for the Chair of the Commission who stood down in June. The first competition resulted in only one application and was run again, attracting four applicants all of whom were interviewed. Two of the interviewed candidates were found appointable, with one given preference as they were a Welsh speaker, which was listed as a desirable criterion. The panel noted that both candidates who were found appointable only met the minimum criteria. As such, you have indicated that you have decided not to appoint either candidate, as is permitted by section 3.1 of the Governance Code, which states that 'Ministers may choose not to appoint any of the candidates and re-run the competition'.

While you have outlined separate concerns regarding the appointment of both individuals, it would appear that the advertised criteria ultimately did not match your requirements for the role. This has regrettably resulted in a further unsuccessful competition and a delay in informing candidates of the outcome of their applications, which is not in the spirit of good customer care. It is vital that the advertised assessment criteria are decided carefully, ahead of a competition launching, in order to help prevent candidates who have met the minimum criteria not being deemed suitable for appointment.

You have set out the substantial period of work that the Commission is set to undergo, for which the leadership of a Chair will be required. You are proposing to appoint an individual without competition as Chair of the Commission while this work is carried out, once a suitable individual has been identified. The Code does state that a competition should be re-run, but given that the two previous competitions attracted few applications, I agree with your view that an immediate third competition is unlikely to widen the field of applicants.

Therefore, I am content with the proposed approach to appoint an individual as Chair for two years without a competition. I would be grateful if you could ensure that I am consulted on the individual, once identified, well in advance of their proposed appointment.

You have also outlined your intention to appoint the current deputy Chair of the Commission, Ceri Stradling, as interim Chair while a suitable individual. I am content with this interim appointment to ensure the post does not remain vacant.

*All best wishes
yours sincerely
Peter Riddell*

Peter Riddell
Commissioner for Public Appointments