

# Preferred candidate for Welsh Revenue Authority chair confirmed

Before the chair of the WRA is formally appointed, the National Assembly's Finance Committee will hold a pre-appointment hearing on Thursday February 16 to take evidence from Ms Bishop as the preferred candidate.

Ms Bishop's announcement as the preferred candidate follows a recommendation by an independently-chaired appointments panel after a fair and open recruitment exercise regulated by the Commission for Public Appointments.

The Tax Collection and Management (Wales) Act, which was passed by the National Assembly in April 2016, established devolved tax arrangements in Wales, including the creation of the WRA to collect and manage devolved Welsh taxes.

The WRA will become operational from April 2018, when stamp duty land tax and landfill tax are devolved to Wales. The WRA will be a non-ministerial department of the Welsh Government, which is accountable to Welsh Ministers, the National Assembly and Welsh taxpayers.

## **Notes**

- A pre-appointment hearing has been arranged for the chair of the WRA as this is the first non-ministerial department to be established by the Welsh Government. Pre-appointment hearings are used elsewhere in the UK to enable committees to take evidence from the government's preferred candidate for certain key public appointments prior to the final appointment decision.
- The National Assembly's Finance Committee will publish a report setting out its views about the preferred candidate's suitability for the post. A final decision about the appointment will be made by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government.

## **Kathryn Bishop**

- Kathryn has more than 30 years' experience working with organisations undergoing major change – at Accenture, Allied Dunbar, Eagle Star, Zurich and the University of the West of England. Her background includes IT and HR.
- She has a portfolio of commitments and is an associate fellow of Saïd Business School (University of Oxford), where she directs and teaches on leadership programmes for professional service firms and other multinational corporations.
- Kathryn was appointed a civil service commissioner in April 2012 and acted as the interim First Civil Service Commissioner from April to September 2016.
- She is a director of a consulting business, managing projects for clients, including assistance with strategic planning for private sector

organisations, executive agencies and NHS trusts.

- She has held a number of non-executive directorships within government, including the UK Border Agency, the UK Intellectual Property Office and the Welsh Government.

### **The Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA)**

The WRA will have comparable powers to other UK tax authorities so its functions can be undertaken consistently and comprehensively.

As well as collecting tax, the WRA will:

- Provide information, advice and help about taxes to taxpayers
- Resolve complaints and disputes
- Promote tax compliance
- Reduce tax evasion and tax avoidance
- Support the development of Welsh Government tax policy

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## **News story: Primary Authority consultation to help all UK businesses grow**

Changes are to be made to Primary Authority (PA), the gateway to better regulation through single points of contact in local authorities for assured regulatory advice.

From 1 October, 2017, when the Enterprise Act 2016 comes into force, Primary Authority will be open to any size of business, and pre start-ups, through an extension and simplification of the scheme, supported by an improved [Primary Authority Register](#) – an internet resource.

Regulatory Delivery, part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, is replacing the existing orders to implement the new regime and seeking views on:

- Listing the national regulators given the ability to support Primary Authority partnerships
- Simplifying the definition of an ‘enforcement action’
- Updating the definitions of relevant functions within scope of Primary Authority in Scotland and Northern Ireland
- Updating the requirements for an application for a determination by the Secretary of State
- Moving to a system where a partnership covers all of the regulatory functions that a local authority can offer

The changes to the scheme are based on feedback from businesses and regulators already involved in the scheme, and are designed to make achieving prosperity and protection through Primary Authority easier for everyone.

The consultation [Unlocking the Potential of Primary Authority](#) is available to view now. Those with an interest in the scheme (businesses and business groups, local authorities, national regulators, etc) are invited to [take part in the consultation](#).

A BEIS spokesperson said:

“Through Primary Authority, the Government is giving every business – and every person who wants to start a business – access to reliable, tailored regulatory advice. Building on the success of Primary Authority since 2009, we have been listening and have taken action, to ensure it works in the best possible way for everyone.”

- The extension of Primary Authority will give every business, and every person who wants to start a business, access to reliable, tailored regulatory advice
- Having early access to regulatory advice helps businesses get things right first time, protecting consumers and allowing enforcing authorities to target their resources
- The Enterprise Act also brings national regulators closer to the scheme, giving them a role to play in the provision of advice
- These provisions will help Britain ensure its position as the best place in Europe to start and grow a business

Approximately 90% of businesses in Primary Authority are small and medium enterprises. It is estimated that over 250,000 businesses will benefit from Primary Authority as a result of these changes.

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## [Report: Environment faces 'cocktails of threats' from Brexit](#)



13 February 2017

**UK Environment faces a 'cocktail of threats' from Brexit, says report by MP**

- Key environmental rules could become 'unenforceable'
- Desperation for trade deal with the US risks 'chlorine chickens' and 'hormone beef' coming to UK market
- Lucas: we urgently need a 'green guarantee' from the Government to ensure our environment is protected
- Over 1100 EU environmental laws need to be transposed in UK law

A new [report](#) [1] by the Green Party MP, Caroline Lucas, has highlighted what she calls a 'cocktail of risks' to the UK's environment from Brexit.

The report, which has been released just days after the House of Commons voted to trigger Article 50, notes that the EU has been an effective driver of environmental action, and that Britain is now entering a period of 'profound uncertainty' which could lead to the downgrading of many key protections.

As well as detailing the impacts of Brexit on the environment the report calls for a 'Green Guarantee' to ensure that current levels of environmental protection and funding are maintained and strengthened. It also called for a new 'Environment Act' to be put in place ahead of Britain's exit from the EU and for Britain to retain membership of key European agencies.

As part of her report Caroline Lucas revealed House of Commons Library research which finds that over 1100 EU environmental laws will need to be transposed into UK law and that 'the Government has yet to identify all of the EU environment legislation'.

The report spells out ten distinct ways in which Brexit threatens environmental policy in the UK including:

- A lack of oversight of compliance with environmental rules. At present the European Commission and ECJ monitor and act upon breaches of legislation – there is no similar system in place in the UK and laws could become unenforceable.
- Britain exiting key agencies like the European Environment Agency and the Chemicals Agency – which support implementation and development of environmental policies.
- Regulatory equivalencing in new trade deals leading to reduction in environmental protection.
- Potentially exiting from key schemes such as the Emissions Trading Scheme – where the UK has been a key player.
- Reduction in funding for the environment as EU spending on the UK stops. Examples include ending CAP Pillar II payments and the LIFE+ fund. Currently the EU is the major funder for agri-environmental schemes.

Caroline Lucas, a member of the Environmental Audit Committee and a former member of the International of the European Parliament's Trade Committee, said:

"Though we've hardly heard it mentioned by the Government it's clear that British environmental policy faces a cocktail of threats from Brexit. Just days after the Brexit vote in the Commons we can clearly see the huge risks of downgrading environmental protections as part of the post-referendum process. Key laws could become unenforceable, spending on crucial schemes could be cut and new trade deals could undermine existing regulations.

"Outside the EU, there will be much greater probability of legislative change in the UK, more exposure to the political cycle and a danger that investors will be wary of potentially higher risks. The relative attractiveness of the

UK as a place for green investment is in danger of being further reduced.

“Theresa May’s courting of the United States in pursuit of a new Free Trade Agreement, poses an even greater risk that Ministers may be tempted to water down regulations – such as those on GMOs, pesticides, and animal hormones. We could see chlorinated chickens and hormone beef on UK markets.

“As well as outlining many of the dangers we currently face, this report seeks to present solutions. We need a Green Guarantee that will deliver on Government’s commitment to ensuring that “we become the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it. We also need to immediately begin work on introducing an Environment act to ensure that Britain crucial rules and enforcement don’t drop off as Britain exits the EU.”

Notes:

[1] A copy of the report is here: <https://www.carolinelucas.com/sites/carolinelucas.com/files/Safe%20Guarding%20Environment%20after%20Brexit.pdf>

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## [News story: UK Defence companies step up globally at Aero India 2017](#)

Mrs Baldwin, the Minister for Defence Procurement, joins 20 UK companies at the [aerospace exhibition](#) held at Air Force Station Yelahanka. Showcasing some of the most innovative technology in the defence, aviation and security sectors, these cutting edge businesses will be forging long-lasting industrial partnerships and joint ventures with Indian companies.

The visit builds on the [Defence and International Security Partnership \(DISP\)](#) agreed in November 2015.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

The UK and India have much to offer one another in defence: from manufacturing collaboration and simplified export controls, to military cooperation, training and research partnerships.

As Britain steps up globally, we will work together with India to

build knowledge, security and prosperity through a close industrial, military and economic partnership.

Mrs Baldwin is accompanied by the British High Commissioner to India, Dominic Asquith; Lieutenant General Mark Poffley, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff for Military Capability; and Sophie Lane Regional Director for India in the Department of International Trade's Defence and Security Organisation (DSO).

The UK has a cutting-edge range of world class products across the air, land, maritime and security sectors, and Mrs Baldwin called on UK and Indian companies to develop and sustain long term industrial partnerships, to meet the challenges of the future and launch new products into the global marketplace.

[Read Harriett Baldwin's speech to the 'Make In India' Conference.](#)

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