

Serco: Rupert Soames to retire; appointment of Mark Irwin as CEO designate

4 years ago



Serco announces that Rupert Soames has confirmed to the Board his intention to retire from the Company in September 2023, at which point he will be 64 and will have served Serco for over 9 years.

He will step down both from his role as Chief Executive and from the Board at the end of December 2022, and will be succeeded by Mark Irwin, who is currently the CEO of Serco's UK & Europe Division. Mark has been chosen by the Board after a rigorous selection process that involved both internal and external candidates.

Mark, 57, joined Serco in 2013, and between 2014 and 2020 successfully ran Serco's Asia-Pacific region, before moving from Australia to lead the UK & Europe Division. Prior to Serco, Mark had leadership roles in several private equity portfolio businesses in the US and China, and also worked for eight years for GE in the US and Australia.

John Rishton, Chair of Serco, said: "I am delighted to be able to announce Mark Irwin's appointment as CEO designate of what is now a thriving and resilient business, following the successful turnaround led by Rupert Soames. During our selection process it was clear that Mark's deep knowledge of Serco in the UK, Europe and Asia Pacific, as well as his prior experience working in the US and the tremendous results he has delivered for us in all his roles make him the ideal person to lead the Group through its next phase of growth.

"On behalf of the Board, I also want to pay tribute to Rupert. Serco is unrecognisable from the business

that he joined in 2014. Under his leadership, the business was stabilised, a clear strategy developed and executed, which has resulted in the strong and successful business it is today. Rupert should be really proud of what he has achieved.”

Rupert Soames said: “It has been the privilege of my working life to lead Serco for the last eight years, but it is now time for me to outsource myself. My respect and admiration for the wonderful team of people at Serco, who work so hard to deliver superb public services and value for money for taxpayers, is unbounded. As it is for Serco’s customers, who are dedicated public servants facing the immense challenges of delivering high quality public services in difficult times.”

Mark Irwin said: “I am delighted to be given the opportunity to lead Serco in the next stage of its development as one of the world’s leading providers of public services. With its unique Business-to-Government platform, international footprint, strong balance sheet and large and growing order book, Serco is well positioned to deliver superb public services, rewarding careers for colleagues and growing returns to shareholders.”

Alongside Mark’s promotion, Anthony Kirby will move from his role as Group Chief Operating Officer to become Chief Executive of Serco’s UK & Europe business. Anthony joined Serco as Group HR Director in 2017 and was promoted to Group Chief Operating Officer in 2020, in which role he led the development of many elements of Serco’s Business-to-Government platform and has played a key role in delivering the Group’s strong performance over recent years.