

Ron Dobson CBE QFSM FIFireE
London Fire Commissioner
London Fire Brigade Headquarters
3rd Floor
169 Union Street
London SE1 0LL

Our ref:

Date: 4 September 2014

Dear Ron

London resilience

Following the success of the London 2012 resilience arrangements and subsequent discussions between partner bodies on the options available going forward, the Mayor has indicated that he would like to move to closer joint working arrangements for resilience in the capital.

Not only does such an approach fit with the shared services agenda which the Mayorality is looking to promote across the Greater London Authority (GLA) Group, but it also accords with the strategy set out by the London Resilience Forum (LRF), particularly in the sense of seeking an improved joint understanding of situational awareness across all partner bodies.

The Mayor is proposing that the GLA retains its strategic oversight for resilience in the capital, as outlined in the Civil Contingencies Act, while passing day-to-day operational responsibility to the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA). This would involve the four person strong London Resilience Team (LRT) transferring from the GLA's employment and oversight to LFEPA's.

As an associated action, the LRF will be asked at its next meeting on 6 October to agree that its support function passes from the GLA to LFEPA, as that forms part of the responsibilities undertaken by LRT. With its highly regarded experience and well established role within the LRF, it is both appropriate and practicable for LFEPA to assume LRT's functions.

One of the opportunities presented by this reconfiguration is the creation of a new senior level operational post with responsibility for resilience. I would imagine that it would work best if this post were to report directly to you.

The senior postholder would play a key role in bringing together London resilience activities and would be an advocate for strong planning and co-ordination functions in each of the key agencies involved. The creation of the post would also meet legitimate Whitehall expectations as to an appropriately senior point of contact on operational resilience issues in the capital.

I trust our partners will regard this proposal as an evolutionary development to the function, following the Government's decision to devolve London-wide resilience responsibilities to the GLA in 2010.

The Mayoralty will retain a strong oversight of arrangements through the Mayor's Advisory Group, particularly when exercising the Mayor's role as the voice of London in the event of a major incident.

In addition, GLA officers will keep in regular contact with their counterparts in LFEPA to ensure that the new approach works well and meets the Mayor's, and indeed the Government's, expectations.

There would be a number of benefits arising from this change:

- The efficiency and effectiveness gains arising from the London-wide and London borough functions coming under the same management;
- The opportunity presented for an improved understanding of situational awareness;
- The additional capacity arising from the new senior level operational post; and
- A better synergy with Whitehall structures at a senior level.

I am sure that LFEPA will be keen for this proposal to be cost neutral. The GLA will cover the cost on a permanent basis of the four posts transferring to LFEPA and their associated costs. I do not envisage there to be any need for immediate staffing changes but I do foresee longer term efficiency gains for LFEPA from bringing together the resilience teams under the same management.

Therefore, following consultation with the LRF at its 6 October meeting, I would be grateful if you could put this proposal to LFEPA at the next available opportunity, with specific reference to the transfer of the LRT staff and the establishment of a new senior level post.

I am copying this letter to Jeff Jacobs, given his responsibility for GLA staffing arrangements. I understand that the Assembly's GLA Oversight Committee is due to be consulted on the GLA staffing element of these proposals at its meeting on 16 October.

Yours sincerely



Sir Edward Lister
Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor, Policy & Planning