

## REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR FIRE AND RESILIENCE DECISION – DMFD196

### Title: Communications Directorate Restructure

#### Executive summary:

The London Fire Commissioner (LFC) is requesting the approval of the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience to commit revenue expenditure of £502,000 for the purposes of expanding and restructuring London Fire Brigade's (LFB's) Communications Directorate. The structure proposed in this report is for a new Communications and Engagement Directorate, which will provide LFB with the expertise and capacity it requires to help deliver change, and communicate effectively with Londoners, stakeholders and staff.

The London Fire Commissioner Governance Direction 2018 sets out a requirement for the LFC to seek the prior approval of the Deputy Mayor before "[a] commitment to expenditure (capital or revenue) of £150,000 or above as identified in accordance with normal accounting practices...".

#### Decision:

That the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience approves the London Fire Commissioner to commit ongoing additional expenditure of up to £502,000 from 2023-24 onwards, for the restructuring of the Communications Directorate.

#### Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision.

The above request has my approval.

#### Signature:



#### Date:

4 May 2023

## **PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DEPUTY MAYOR**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. Report LFC-23-019 to the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) explains that a high-performing and strategic communications function is crucial to the future of London Fire Brigade (LFB). This is needed to deliver integrated communications campaigns which are fully aligned to Your London Fire Brigade – LFB's new community risk management plan and primary organisational strategy – with the voice of the community at their heart.
- 1.2. Until recently, communications has not been a standalone Directorate. It is only in the last year that the role of Director of Communications was created, and a permanent Director has been appointed. At present, the Communications Directorate is not set up in the most effective way, nor is it making the best use of its resources. The department also carries a risk that it does not have sufficient resources to meet LFB's communication demands.
- 1.3. The work of the Directorate is not currently aligned with Your London Fire Brigade, and the role of the Communications Directorate in delivering the plan is not properly understood or planned. There is no strategic function – so channels are managed, but not issues. This creates risks for the LFC.
- 1.4. The proposed name for the directorate is Communications and Engagement. The new structure is included as an appendix to the appended paper LFC-23-019. The revised structure includes four departments and introduces a communications planning function. These departments would be:
  - Community Engagement
  - Internal Communications
  - Stakeholder Engagement
  - External Communications.

#### **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

##### *Community Engagement*

- 2.1. Community Engagement is a relatively new function for the LFC, set up in 2020 at a cost of £172,000 a year, which funded three staff members (a manager, senior officer, and officer) and a one-off £60,000 budget for engagement events. Since the function was established, the LFC has improved relationships with the Grenfell community; run a series of pilots; and started work on a new strategy that will set out how community engagement will be embedded across the LFC.
- 2.2. The team currently consists of four staff:
  - 1x Community Engagement Manager (salary grade FRS F)
  - 1 x Senior Community Engagement Officer (FRS E)
  - 1 x Community Engagement Officer (FRS D)
  - 1 x Admin Assistant, temporary (FRS C).
- 2.3. The current team is too small to roll out these pilots, and fulfil its obligations in Your London Fire Brigade. The restructure proposes creating a standalone department that would provide much needed support to the expanding work of the team. The restructure would build capacity to support the roll-out of the community engagement pilot across all 33 London boroughs; provide more dedicated support to communities in the aftermath of an incident; and provide leadership, and build community-engagement capacity, across LFB.
- 2.4. The revised structure would be a team of six, consisting of:

- 1 x Head of Community Engagement (Top Management Group (TMG) C)
- 2 x Senior Community Engagement Officer (FRS E)
- 2 x Community Engagement Officer (FRS D)
- 1 x Admin Assistant (FRS C).

2.5. An annual non-staff budget of £100,000 has been requested to support the work of the Community Engagement team. The initial Community Engagement team budget was £60,000 in 2021-22, to run the pilot programme. No funding was provided in 2022-23; and an increased budget from 2023-24 onwards recognises the increased workload of the team; the centrality it will play in rolling out and embedding Your London Fire Brigade; and the nature of community engagement. This non-staff funding will deliver:

- a programme of engagement activities aimed directly at identified vulnerable, seldom-heard, and hard-to-reach communities, to increase understanding of our services and how we can work with these groups
- the continued roll-out and development of the Community Forums
- a series of focus groups and polling to understand community views on a range of issues, including building safety and regulation; fire safety; and incident response and recovery
- establishing a programme of dedicated support to communities in the aftermath of an incident.

#### *Internal Communications*

2.6. Internal Communications is currently an LFC corporate red risk. There is insufficient expertise to deliver the corporate communication strategy or support business-critical activity. This means staff are unable to understand or track corporate change initiatives, and cannot see how it improves the work they do. At present the Internal Communications team has:

- 1x Internal Communications Manager (FRS F)
- 2 x Internal Communications Officer (FRS C)
- 1 x temporary Senior Internal Communications Officer (FRS E).

2.7. A restructure of the team will recognise the importance of internal communications, and create a standalone department that will drive change and improve internal communication. A Head of Internal Communications will replace the Head of Brand and Events. The current Senior Internal Digital Communications Officer (FRS E) will move into the Internal Communications team, along with the Internal Communications Manager, Transformation. The Events team – who deliver the long-service awards, all staff briefings, the staff conference, and events such as LFB Pride and the Carol Service – will also form part of the new department.

2.8. To support this change in the long term, an Internal Communications Officer post will be removed and the current temporary Senior Internal Communications Officer role would be made permanent. This will embed the new division and give it the expertise and experience to address the current risk and deliver the corporate communication strategy. It will also support the building of capability and consistency among all managers to communicate effectively with their teams.

2.9. The new team would consist of:

- 1x Head of Internal Communications (TMG C)
- 1 x Internal Communications Manager (FRS F)
- 1 x Internal Communications Manager, Transformation (FRS F)
- 1 x Senior Internal Communications Officer (FRS E)
- 1 x Senior Internal Digital Communications Officer (FRS E)
- 1 x Internal Communications Officer (FRS C)
- 1 x Events Team Manager (FRS F)
- 2 x Senior Events Officers (FRS E)

### *Public affairs*

- 2.10. Demand on the three-strong Public Affairs team is significant and has grown substantially in the past year. As such it was agreed in July 2022 for extra temporary resource to create a new Public Affairs Manager position at FRS grade F and to regrade the Public Affairs Officer from FRS C to FRS D, to better reflect the requirements of the role.
- 2.11. Making these resources permanent will allow the team to be resourced properly and continue to build strong relationships with the GLA, Home Office and other key stakeholders. The team also supports the development and communication of the LFC's policy in a number of key areas such as scrutiny committees, including but not limited to the Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee. This will help LFB to provide timely, relevant and accurate responses to Mayor's Questions every month, which together with scrutiny committees are a key part of the way LFB is held accountable by the Mayor and the GLA on behalf of Londoners.
- 2.12. Permanent resources enable support, advice and involvement in policy and position development around the government's White Paper on Fire Reform; the implementation of the Fire Safety Act; the forthcoming Building Safety Regulator; and the consultation on Emergency Evacuation Information Sharing. Bringing LFC stakeholder engagement out into fire stations with a greater emphasis on engaging with MPs, Assembly Members, local councillors, interest groups and others in the community, showing them how we work.

### *Print Room team*

- 2.13. It is also proposed to upgrade two staff in the Print Room, who will take additional responsibility for brand protection, as we have removed the Head of Brand role to create the Head of Internal Communications position. The Print Room team currently consists of a Digital Print Manager (FRS C) and a Digital Print Operator (FRS B). The team would become Digital Print Manager (FRS D) and a Digital Print Operator (FRS C).

### *Leadership*

- 2.14. With a small communications function, it is vital that the LFC has experienced and capable leaders who can provide the right level of strategic oversight and guidance. This year, the team has had supernumerary funding for a Deputy Director of Communications, which will be removed from the structure. As it is proposed to remove the temporary Deputy post, it is proposed to upgrade the two remaining Heads (External and Internal Communications) and create a new Head of Community Engagement, so that they are at the same level as the Head of Stakeholder Engagement, and at the right level for the impact and scope of the roles.
- 2.15. This streamlines the management of the team creating a flatter structure and ensuring the roles better reflect their responsibilities across the board. It ensures all roles are aligned with each other and with similar roles across the organisation.
- 2.16. 'Head of' roles will take on a greater responsibility for strategic communications. Moving the Directorate away from the reactive approach it currently adopts to ensure issues are managed effectively; and the role of Communications is impactful and delivering measurable change in behaviours or opinions. They will also provide greater leadership to the wider LFB TMG providing expert advice and driving change. These changes also provide increased resilience during crisis and major incidents.
- 2.17. The current structure is:
- Director of Communications – TMG A
  - Deputy Director of Communications (temporary) – TMG C
  - Head of Media, Digital & Internal Communications – FRS G
  - Head of Community and Stakeholder Engagement – TMG C
  - Head of Brand & Events – FRS G.

2.18. It is proposed that this structure changes to:

- Director of Communications – TMG A
- Head of External Communications – TMG C
- Head of Stakeholder Engagement – TMG C
- Head of Community Engagement – TMG C
- Head of Internal Communications – TMG C.

#### *Communications Planning*

2.19. It is proposed to create a Communication Planning Manager (FRS F) role to support the Directorate by driving a more strategic approach to LFC communications. The key aspects of the role include devising and delivering a new communications-planning process to ensure communications are aligned to the LFC's strategic priorities, and deliver maximum impact and influence across audiences. The post will track future initiatives and decisions to develop and implement a communications planning and project management process that enables the team and the organisation to effectively identify, develop and plan all communications activity.

2.20. The role will develop and implement a process to ensure all communication activity is properly evaluated; follow up on project successes and identify areas of improvement for future projects; and support the Communications team to work effectively with the rest of LFB.

#### *Communications training and development*

2.21. The Communications team currently has no budget for non-pay costs. The Communication Directorate staff have not received any training or development for many years, and their capabilities are lagging as new communications skills and techniques emerge. A budget of £15,000 a year (approximately £350 per head) has been requested, which will help the Directorate to receive or deliver:

- chartered-level training for all Directorate staff in understanding audiences, and in measurement and evaluation of outcomes
- an exercise to test and train all Directorate staff in delivering major incident communication plans to maintain LFB's major incident capability
- memberships of professional bodies, such as the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and the Local Government Communications network. These provide additional access to training and resources.

2.15 The cost of the restructure will be funded fully from LFB's 2023-24 budget, which includes growth and savings proposals of £502,000 (net) for the Communications Directorate.

2.16 A breakdown of this restructure is outlined in the table below.

Type of investment	Team	Investment	Notes
Non-staffing	Community Engagement	£100,000	The team will have a budget of £100k for community events.
Non-staffing	Departmental	£15,000	Staff training and membership of professional bodies.
Staffing	Community Engagement	£166,000	To fund an additional officer and senior officer; and upgrade the manager role in recognition of the broader strategic role they will play.
Staffing	Internal Communications	£13,000	Support the creation of a standalone team. Make a temporary role permanent.
Staffing	Leadership	£43,000	Upgrade to posts so they are at the right level to recognise the impact and scope now required.
Staffing	Public Affairs	£79,000	Make permanent temporary posts agreed last year in recognition of the increased workload of the team.
Staffing	Planning	£72,000	A new post to drive a more strategic approach to communications.
Staffing	Print Room	£14,000	Upgrade two staff in recognition of extra responsibilities.
	Total	£502,000	

### 3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when taking decisions. This in broad terms involves understanding the potential impact of policy and decisions on different people, taking this into account and then evidencing how decisions were reached.
- 3.2. It is important to note that consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty is not a one-off task. The duty must be fulfilled before taking a decision, at the time of taking a decision, and after the decision has been taken.
- 3.3. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirements to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), race (ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, and sexual orientation.
- 3.4. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision-takers in the exercise of all their functions, to have due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
  - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.5. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in

particular, to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic
  - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
  - encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 3.6. The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- 3.7. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- tackle prejudice
  - promote understanding.
- 3.8. A full Equality Impact Assessment is included as an appendix to the LFC report.

#### **4. Other considerations**

*Conflicts of interest*

- 4.1. There are no conflicts of interest to declare from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

#### **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1. This report recommends that a new Communications and Engagement Directorate Structure is agreed at an additional ongoing revenue cost of £502,000 starting in the 2023-24 financial year. An additional ongoing budget for this cost for 2023/24 and all subsequent financial years was agreed in the LFC's Final 2023-24 budget. This included investment proposals of £546,000 and savings proposals of £44,000.

#### **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1. Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the LFC is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office. Under section 327D of the GLA Act 1999, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the Mayor may issue to the LFC specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.
- 6.2. Additionally, by direction dated 1 April 2018, the Mayor set out those matters, for which the LFC would require the prior approval of either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (the Deputy Mayor).
- 6.3. Paragraph (b) of Part 2 of that direction requires the LFC to seek the prior approval of the Deputy Mayor before "[a] commitment to expenditure (capital or revenue) of £150,000 or above as identified in accordance with normal accounting practices...".
- 6.4. The Deputy Mayor's approval is accordingly required for the LFC to approve the additional expenditure requested in this report.

6.5. These comments have been adopted from those provided by the LFC's General Counsel Department in report LFC-23-019 to the LFC.

**Appendices and supporting papers:**

LFC-23-019 – Communications Directorate Restructure and appendices



**Public access to information**

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will be published either within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

**Part 1 Deferral:**

**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO**

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

**Part 2 Confidentiality:** Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a part 2 form – NO**

**ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

**Drafting officer**

Richard Berry has drafted this report with input from the LFC and in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

**Assistant Director/Head of Service**

Niran Mothada has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience for approval.

✓

**Advice**

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

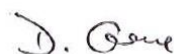
**Corporate Investment Board**

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 3 April 2023.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

**Signature**



**Date**

4 May 2023