

REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR FIRE DECISION – DMFD250

Fire and rescue staff 2024-25 pay settlement

Executive summary:

This report requests the approval of the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service (the Deputy Mayor) to authorise the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) to commit revenue expenditure of £2,898,000, in order to implement the 2024-25 pay settlement for fire and rescue staff (reached with the trade unions GMB and UNISON).

The proposed pay settlement is in line with that agreed nationally for operational and control staff, which has already been implemented and the pay settlement for Top Management Group staff, the expenditure for which was approved in Deputy Mayor for Fire Decision 248.

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 Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service authorises the London Fire Commissioner to commit revenue expenditure of £2,898,000, in order to implement the 2024-25 pay settlement for FRS staff that has been reached with the trade unions GMB and UNISON.

Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service

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

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

31 October 2024

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Report LFC-24-097x to the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) explains that the annual settlement date for the fire and rescue staff (FRS) general pay increase is 1 April; and the effective date of the annual salary progression increase (SPI) (i.e., progression through the pay bands) is 1 July.
- 1.2 For the 2024-25 pay settlement, discussions and negotiations began on 17 April 2024. On 24 September 2024, the trade unions GMB and UNISON (collectively, Staff Side) informed the LFC of the outcome of their recent Staff Side meeting.
- 1.3 According to the communication to the LFC, dated 24 September 2024, the LFC's offer of a 4 per cent pay increase, and a 2 per cent SPI, was 'reluctantly' accepted. However, the increase offer (above four per cent) to the first aid/fire warden allowance was not accepted, suggesting further discussions at the Joint Committee for Fire and Rescue Staff.
- 1.4 The settlement agreed (based on current salary) is as follows:
 - from 1 April 2024: a pay increase of 4 per cent
 - from 1 July 2024: a salary progression increase of 2 per cent for eligible staff.
- 1.5 The 4 per cent increase will also apply to the associated allowances (including the first aid and fire warden allowance whilst discussions continue).
- 1.6 London Fire Brigade's (LFB's) FRS pay settlement is consistent with the pay settlement reached for Top Management Group (TMG) staff (Deputy Mayor for Fire Decision 248 available [here](#)); and the national pay settlement reached for operational/control staff within the National Joint Council for the same period.
- 1.7 A FRS/TMG pay and benefits review was undertaken independently by QCG consultants. This aims to ensure that the pay and reward system for professional services remains competitive, enabling LFB to effectively attract and retain talent. The review has now been completed. Its recommendations have been received, and a programme plan is being developed to review them. LFB shall work closely with stakeholders, including the trade unions, in relation to reviewing the recommendations.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The approved LFC Final 2024-25 Budget report (LFC-24-027) forecasts a 3 per cent pay award increase for staff. The settlement is for a 4 per cent general pay rise and a 2 per cent SPI for 2024-25.
- 2.2 The total revenue cost of the 2024-25 pay settlement for the 4 per cent general pay rise and the 2 per cent SPI is £2,898,000, based on current staff salaries plus staff eligibility for the SPI. This is broken down in the table below:

Table 1: Breakdown of total FRS pay settlement costs 2024-25

General pay increase (4%)	SPI (2%)
£2,507,000	£391,000

- 2.3 The revenue amount already budgeted for the 2024-25 general pay rise settlement is £1,880,000. This means the additional revenue expenditure to cover the additional 1 per cent pay increase, above the 3 per cent budgeted, is £627,000. This will be drawn from the 2024-25 Budget Flexibility Reserve.

The additional cost of the 2 per cent for SPI payment (£391,000) is funded through staff turnover within the FRS group.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service (the Deputy Mayor) 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 with a relevant protected characteristic, where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons with a relevant protected characteristic, that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
 - encourage persons with 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. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed which evaluates no negative impact or restrictions on its application to staff with protected characteristics and complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty responsibilities.
- 3.9. Although a pay increase is generally accepted to be beneficial, it is recognised that the pay increase (based on a percentage increase across all FRS grades) does mean that staff on higher FRS grades receive more money than those on lower FRS grades. It is also recognised that a flat increase to all staff would maintain any existing pay gaps between under/overrepresented groups.
- 3.10. The action plan detailed in the LFB gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap report 2023 (LFC-24-086, which includes FRS staff) sets out a range of actions to address the pay gap. These include improving data collation, recruitment and career progression.

4. Other considerations

Workforce comments

- 4.1 The 2024-25 pay settlement has been negotiated with the trade union and represents a fair and consistent approach, whilst also recognising the value of the FRS staff and the work they undertake.

Sustainability comments

- 4.2 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from the recommendations within this decision.

Procurement comments

- 4.3 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations within this decision.

Conflicts of interest

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

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 The report recommends that the 2024-25 FRS pay settlement is agreed to ensure consistency with other staff groups – the national pay settlement reached for operational/control staff, which has already been implemented, and the approved pay settlement for TMG staff. The FRS offer has already been accepted by the GMB and UNISON, the trade unions for FRS staff.
- 5.2 The proposal is for a cost-of-living increase of 4 per cent, at a cost of £2,507,000 and a SPI of two per cent, at a cost of up to £391k for a total cost of up to £2,898,000. The Final 2024-25 Budget report (LFC-24-027) included ongoing funding of 3 per cent for the general pay rise; and assumes that the SPI is funded by staff turnover within the FRS group, as staff join at a lower point on the pay scale, and leave at a higher point.
- 5.3 The total revenue cost of the 4 per cent pay award is £2,507,000. Of this, £1,880,000 (a 3 per cent award) was budgeted for as part of the 2024-25 budget report. This means the additional revenue expenditure to cover the additional 1 per cent pay increase is £627,000. This will be drawn from the Budget Flexibility Reserve in 2024-25. The revenue cost of the 2 per cent for SPI payment (£391,000) will be met through staff turnover in year.
- 5.4 The Budget Flexibility Reserve had an opening balance of £13,560,000 at the start of the 2024-25 financial year.

- 5.5 The Budget Flexibility Reserve is forecasted to have an uncommitted balance of £2,883,000 by March 2025, as per the LFC Quarter 1 2024-25 Financial Monitoring report. This balance includes the impact of the £627,000 pressure above.
- 5.6 It should also be noted that, as a result of the forecast revenue overspend for 2024-25, the Quarter 1 report proposes that the remaining balance on the Budget Flexibility Reserve after this draw is transferred to the General Reserve to support in year overspend.
- 5.7 The budget for pay inflation is reviewed annually as part of the budget-setting process for future years. LFB's 2025-26 Budget Submission to the Mayor will also include the ongoing cost of the 1 per cent element of the pay award above the 2024-25 budget position. This pay element of the overall LFB budget will be prioritised over other (and more discretionary) expenditure to ensure ongoing affordability.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 This report seeks approval to implement the FRS pay settlement figures for 2024-25, following agreement reached with representative bodies.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 Paragraph (b) of Part 2 of the said 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". The commitment of revenue expenditure referred to in this report therefore requires approval from the Deputy Mayor.
- 6.5 The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (the Act), under which the LFC must secure the provision of personnel. Under the Act the LFC may also do anything that they consider incidental, or indirectly incidental, to their core functions. Additionally, section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the LFC to appoint officers and determine their reasonable terms and conditions, including conditions as to remuneration.
- 6.6 These comments have been adopted from those provided by the LFC's General Counsel Department in report LFC-24-097x to the LFC.

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix 1 – LFC report LFC-24-097x – FRS 2024-25 Pay Settlement

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

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

Soeli Dayus 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 Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service for approval.

✓

Advice

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

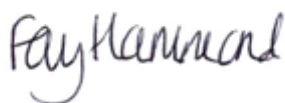
A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 28 October 2024.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:



Date:

31 October 2024