

REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR PLANNING, REGENERATION AND THE FIRE SERVICE DECISION – DMFD239

Firefighter Development team

Executive summary:

The London Fire Commissioner (LFC) seeks approval from the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service, to commit revenue expenditure of up to £2,346,741 in 2024-25; £2,473,431 in 2025-26; and £1,987,974 annually in future years. This is to implement a Firefighter Development team. This includes the costs associated with staffing the team, training, operational equipment and property requirements.

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, approves the London Fire Commissioner’s request to commit revenue expenditure of up to £2,346,741 in 2024-25; £2,473,431 in 2025-26; and £1,987,974 annually in future years. This is to create a Firefighter Development team.

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:

26/03/2025

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Report LFC-24-098y to the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) provides a detailed overview of the proposals and sets out the business case for the implementation of a new Firefighter Development (FFD) team. This decision paper provides a high-level summary of the proposals.
- 1.2. Previously, Babcock Training Limited (London Fire Brigade's (LFB's) contracted training provider) oversaw a 13-week FFD programme, after which recruits completed their training at a fire station.
- 1.3. In April 2024 the programme was extended to 15 weeks, with two further weeks of training at operational fire stations.
- 1.4. The proposal now is to reduce Babcock's training element to 11 weeks; and offer wraparound support through a dedicated LFB FFD team. This team will provide four extra weeks' training (two weeks before the Babcock training and two after). It will work with Babcock to deliver training independently and jointly, as required.
- 1.5. Currently LFB has 400 trainees on the level 3 Firefighter Apprenticeship programme. A further 264 apprentices are forecast to join across both of 2024-25 and 2025-26; and 154 in 2026-27. It is proposed that the structure and number of roles within the FFD team will adjust (from 35 in 2024-25, to 34 in 2025-26, and to 27 in 2027-28) as the number of new trainees decreases. LFB's existing Learning and Professional Development (LPD) Training and Assurance team will take up the role of quality assurance once the new programme has been embedded.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. For some time, work has been carried out at LFB to develop an improved training programme and implement an oversight team for trainee firefighters. The proposals address many of the recommendations following LFB's internal investigation into the death of trainee firefighter, Jaden Matthew Francois-Esprit, who tragically took his own life in August 2020.
- 2.2. Implementing this team also contributes to LFB's cultural transformation. It should help develop, mentor and support new recruits through their three-year development programme.
- 2.3. The aim is to reduce the number of trainee firefighters who resign or must retake parts of their course, mitigating against LFB's corporate risk in this area.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The public sector equality duty requires the identification and evaluation of the likely potential impacts, both positive and negative, of the decision on those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) and set out how you are addressing the duties).
- 3.2. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and the proposal is noted as having a positive impact for addressing the concerns and barriers faced by the increasingly diverse trainees that LFB is actively recruiting.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. Informal consultation has taken place with regular meetings between LFB's LPD team and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) throughout the development of the proposals.
- 4.2. The FBU has raised concerns over the probation policy for trainee firefighters, as well as the course duration of the FFD programme. LFB has committed to continuing discussions on these matters. Neither of these areas of concern specifically relate to the establishment of a dedicated FFD team, as per this proposal.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Budget approval for the creation of the team was approved in LFB's final budget submission 2024-25, and costs are being met from within existing department budgets.
- 5.2. The anticipated cost of the FFD team implementation is approximately £2,346,741 in 2024-25; £2,473,431 in 2025-26; and £1,987,974 annually in future years.
- 5.3. These costs are based on 2024-25 staffing costs incorporating a 4 per cent pay award; and 2025-26 and 2026-27 staffing costs, incorporating anticipated future year pay increases at 2 per cent. This allows for full costing over the three years.
- 5.4. Funding of £2,989,000 (for 2024-25), £2,010,000 (for 2025-26) and £2,010,000 (for 2026-27) to create the team was approved as a Training and Professional departmental budget. The 2024-25 underspend to budget will be held in reserves for the following year. The total anticipated costs across the three years, outlined in this paper, would therefore stay under these approved budgets, leaving a potential surplus of £200,854. These are the figures that are reflected in the latest budget submission.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. Section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 states that the LFC is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office.
- 6.2. Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004) states that the LFC is the fire and rescue authority for Greater London.
- 6.3. Under section 327D of the Greater London Authority 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.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. 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 practice".
- 6.6. The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by section 7 (2)(a) of the FRSA 2004, under which the LFC must secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting.
- 6.7. Furthermore, under section 7 (2)(b) of the aforementioned Act the LFC must secure the provision of training for personnel.

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix 1 – Report LFC-24-098y – Firefighter Development Team

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

Rachael Hickman 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 24 March 2025.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:



Date:

25/03/2025