

REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR FIRE DECISION – DMFD279

Terrain support vehicles

Executive summary:

This report seeks approval for the London Fire Commissioner to purchase four terrain support vehicles (TSVs). These were previously trialed by London Fire Brigade (LFB) as wildfire response vehicles (WRVs), during a successful pilot. LFB considers that owning these vehicles will allow for their year-round use; and will bring considerable operational and safety benefits.

LFB has a time-limited opportunity to buy, at reduced cost, the four WRVs it leased in summer 2025. These have been adapted specifically for LFB. Of the four vehicles proposed for purchase, two have already been procured by LFB at a reduced cost (as set out in Part 2). For the purpose of this report, however, expenditure will cover the associated capital and revenue costs for all four vehicles.

Wildfires are a recognised and growing risk to London's communities, infrastructure and environment. LFB responded to a record 207 wildfires in 2022. In the summers of 2024 and 2025, LFB piloted ways to improve its wildfire response capability, including through leasing off-road WRVs and associated equipment.

LFB has identified cost savings as part of its hose layer unit (HLU) replacement project, as an opportunity to redirect capital expenditure (to the amounts set out in Part 2) to fund this proposal. LFB has determined that it can safely reduce its requirement for HLUs; and proposes that their replacement (scheduled for 2025-26) can be delayed until August 2031.

LFB proposes to cover costs associated with maintaining the four TSVs (to the amounts set out in Part 2) by bidding for funds through its budget-setting process for 2026-27 onwards. LFB has confirmed that the bid has been accepted into the draft budget; but remains subject to approval through the final budget process.

Should LFB proceed with the procurement of TSVs, a formal staffing model will need to be developed for the identified locations, in consultation with the Fire Brigades Union.

Decision:

That the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service authorises the London Fire Commissioner to commit capital expenditure, and associated revenue costs (as set out within Part 2 of this report), for the purpose of procuring terrain support vehicles (formerly called wildfire response vehicles), which provide extreme weather capability.

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 November 2025

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Report LFC-25-079 to the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) provides a detailed overview of the proposal made in this paper. Below is a summary of that report.
- 1.2. In summer 2022, LFB responded to a record 207 wildfires. This prompted LFB to introduce a pilot programme to test how it could build and sustain a specialist wildfire response capability. This work included trialling a new operational model, equipment and training.
- 1.3. As part of the pilot, LFB tested four off-road wildfire response vehicles (WRVs), and associated equipment, over two summers (July-September 2024 and May-September 2025). Overall, LFB found that the WRVs provided additional tactical options when faced with wildfires; improved crew safety; provided efficient water use; and improved access to difficult terrain.
- 1.4. After user feedback from the first phase of the pilot, in summer 2024, LFB leased a different WRV model for summer 2025. LFB reports that these offered more space; better storage; improved water economy; and extra firefighting equipment, added at LFB's request.
- 1.5. LFB has a time-limited offer to buy four WRVs that were adapted to meet LFB's specific wildfire-response requirements. Two of the WRVs trialled in summer 2025 were purchased at a price set out in Part 2, as the supplier provided priority access to LFB at that time. The supplier has since offered LFB priority access to purchase the remaining two vehicles before they are made available to other buyers (as set out in Part 2). This offer is available until 28 November 2025.
- 1.6. LFC-025-079 concludes that the customised WRVs available for purchase have shown their value in real-world incidents; and that they support LFB's strategic risk-mitigation objectives.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. LFB has recommended to the LFC that it should go ahead in procuring the four customised WRVs leased for the second phase of its pilot (May-September 2025). LFB notes that two WRVs have already been purchased. The recommendation to the LFC includes capital and revenue costs for the four WRVs.
- 2.2. With this purchase of the customised WRVs (to be known as terrain support vehicles (TSVs)), LFB wishes to put in place a permanent, year-round response to wildfires and other extreme weather events in London. LFB expects that this would be led by the Operational Resilience and Control directorate, with Operational Policy and Assurance providing policy support.
- 2.3. LFB proposes funding the capital purchase of the TSVs (to the amount set out in Part 2) through borrowing. It also proposes reallocating part of existing capital budgets to TSVs. These budgets are currently slated to replace other operational equipment. This reallocation is explained at 2.4, below.

Proposal to reallocate previously agreed expenditure

- 2.4. LFB has determined that it can safely reduce and further postpone planned capital spending on hose layer unit (HLU) equipment, due to low usage and mileage across the fleet (LFB extended their operational life once before, following DMFD115 in June 2021). LFB proposes to reallocate this to cover the capital and financing costs of buying the TSVs.
- 2.5. LFB reports that its Operational Resilience and Control group has conducted a Specialist Capability Review. This identified that LFB could make savings from its capital budget by:
 - reducing its requirement for HLU equipment from five units to the existing four

- extending, by up to five years, the operational life of the four HLUs currently slated for replacement in 2025-26.
- 2.6. LFB has submitted an investment bid, as part of its budget-planning process, to meet the TSVs' annual maintenance cost from 2026-27 onwards. LFB reports that:
- the bid has been accepted into the draft budget, but remains subject to approval through the final budget process
 - if the investment bid is not approved, and savings are not delivered through the Specialist Capability Review, then alternative savings will need to be found to cover maintenance costs.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service (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 involves understanding the potential impact of policy and decisions, both positive and negative, on those with protected characteristics; 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. LFB reports that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed, ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The EIA identified no detrimental impacts that cannot be mitigated or are unjustified (see Appendix 1). Additionally, LFB policy relating to wildfire firefighting (PN981) has an EIA specific to those protocols. LFB notes that the EIA for the TSVs will require review once this paper is agreed, and the staffing model described within LFC-25-079 is considered.

4. Other considerations

Strategic context

- 4.1. LFB reports a continuing urgent need for enhanced wildfire response capabilities, because climate trends, combined with London's geography (many green spaces close to homes and businesses), exacerbate the risk from wildfires in London. In 2025, an exceptionally dry spring and repeated heatwaves meant that the ground remained dry and highly flammable.
- 4.2. LFB has provided additional information on how it deployed WRVs during the pilot:
- In summer 2024 (July to September inclusive) the vehicles attended 28 incidents, including 15 small fires (one to four pumps), five medium-sized fires (five to nine pumps), and one large fire (10 pumps).
 - In summer 2025 (May to September inclusive), LFB deployed WRVs to 74 grass fires: 56 small fires (one to four pumps), 12 medium-sized fires (six to eight pumps) and six large fires (10 or more pumps).

Financial risk

- 4.3. LFB doesn't yet have budgetary cover for maintenance costs for the WRVs/TSVs (to the amount set out in Part 2). It has put in a bid to the 2026-27 budget planning round to cover these costs.

Deployment locations

- 4.4. LFB reports that WRV deployment was flexible and dynamic; and coordinated by the London Operations Centre, based on risk and operational demand. The deployment sites used during the pilot were in Feltham, Walthamstow, Enfield and Biggin Hill. These locations were selected based on historical incident data and staffing resilience. LFB has committed to review these locations in autumn 2025, for currency and efficiency.
- 4.5. LFB has confirmed that it is awaiting the final decision on procurement, before it confirms the deployment locations. Modelling suggests each area will maintain a TSV to maximise coverage and minimise attendance times. Operational Resilience and Control will work with departments across LFB and the Fire Brigades Union to identify the most appropriate locations for the vehicles.

Staffing considerations

- 4.6. If LFB receives approval to buy the WRVs, it will need to develop a formal staffing model for the base locations, in consultation with the Fire Brigades Union. This should consider both the added value from WRVs, and permanent staffing versus peak-period staffing requirements.

Sustainability considerations

- 4.7. LFB reports that, according to its Technical Service Support Unit, there are currently very limited options to deliver electric all-terrain vehicles; the necessary infrastructure to meet LFB's operational requirements is also lacking. The few vehicles that do exist are largely untested for LFB's specific uses; and are currently constrained by high costs and long delivery times.

Conflicts of interest

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

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Financial comments are set out in Part 2.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The LFC's General Counsel's Department have confirmed the following (the LFC's Procurement team's comments are captured in Part 2 of this decision form).
- 6.2. It has been recommended that LFB proceeds with the procurement of four WRVs that it leased via Angloco in summer 2025. The LFC therefore seeks authorisation, from the Deputy Mayor, to:
- commit the capital expenditure set out in Part 2 of this decision form, for the purpose of procuring TSVs
 - agree that the capital expenditure is allocated from the budget to the fleet replacement of HLUs for the purpose of procuring TSVs.
- 6.3. The proposals in this decision form are intended to enhance the LFC's continued compliance with its legal duties, as set out below.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. 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.
- 6.6. 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".
- 6.7. The Statutory basis for the action proposed in this Report is provided by sections 7 and 5A of the Fire and Safety Rescue Act 2004 (FRSA 2004). Under section 7 (2)(a) of the FRSA 2004, the LFC has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting; and section 5A allows the LFC to procure personnel, services and equipment they consider appropriate for purposes incidental or indirectly incidental to their functional purposes. Section 7 of the FRSA sets out that:

"A fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of –

- (a) extinguishing fires in its area, and

- (b) protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area

In making provision under subsection (1) a fire and rescue authority must in particular –

- (a) secure the provision of the personnel, services and equipment necessary efficiently to meet all normal requirements “

6.8. The LFC is also designated a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2014 (CCA). The CCA defines an emergency in section 1 as:

- (a) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom,
- (b) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment of a place in the United Kingdom, or
- (c) war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom.

6.9. This requires that, in addition to the duties under section 7, FRSA, the LFC under section 2 of the CCA must:

- (a) from time to time assess the risk of an emergency occurring
- (b) from time to time assess the risk of an emergency making it necessary or expedient for the person or body to perform any of his or its functions.
- (c) maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring so far as is reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the person or body is able to continue to perform his or its functions.
- (d) maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs or is likely to occur the person or body is able to perform his or its functions as far as necessary or desirable for the purpose of –
 - (i) preventing the emergency,
 - (ii) reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects, or
 - (iii) taking other action in connection with it,
- (e) consider whether an assessment carried out under paragraph (a) or (b) makes it necessary or expedient for the person or body to add to or modify plans maintained under paragraph (c) or (d)
- (f) arrange for the publication of all or part of the assessments made and plan maintained under paragraphs (a) to (d) in so far as publication is necessary or desirable for the purposes of –
 - (i) preventing an emergency
 - (ii) reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency,
 - (iii) enabling other action to be taken in connection with an emergency, and
- (g) maintain arrangements to warn the public, and to provide information and advice to the public, if an emergency is likely to occur or has occurred.”

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix 1 – LFC-025-079 London Fire Brigade Wildfire Vehicle pilot – Part 1

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment – Terrain Support Vehicle (TSV) Wildfire PM

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? YES

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer

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

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service

Chandru Dissanayeke 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:

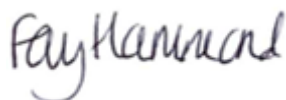
A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 24 November 2025.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature



Date

26 November 2025