

MAYOR OF LONDON

Anne Clarke AM

Chair of the London Assembly Fire Committee
C/o diane.richards@london.gov.uk

Our ref: MGLA290726-4764

Date: 20 October 2026

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the London Assembly Fire Committee regarding London's preparedness for increasingly severe wildfire risk and the work being undertaken to ensure the capital remains resilient in the face of growing climate-related challenges.

Preparing for the impacts of climate change, including the heightened risk of wildfires, is critical. As you rightly point out, the climate crisis is having a devastating impact on our environment, with temperatures rising to record levels in London and around the world this summer. London experienced record-breaking temperatures in May, June and August, and by mid-August had entered its fifth official heatwave of the year.

It is vital we both tackle the causes of climate change and ensure that London and its emergency services are equipped to respond effectively to the risks and impacts that are already being felt because of climate change.

The prolonged period of extreme heat this summer has presented significant challenges for our emergency services. London Fire Brigade (LFB) has responded to a record number of wildfires over a sustained period. On a single day in July, LFB received over 2,000 calls, including more than 200 calls to grass fires. And between May and August, London's firefighters attended over 55,000 incidents and took over 100,000 emergency calls. I want to thank LFB for its continued work to keep Londoners safe under incredibly tough conditions.

Summers like these are no longer isolated events. The risk of wildfires is becoming an increasingly significant challenge for London and one for which we must continue to prepare. I can assure you that I remain committed to supporting LFB and ensuring that London is as prepared as possible for the growing threat of wildfires.

The adequacy of LFB's funding, operational capacity, specialist equipment and resilience to respond to multiple simultaneous wildfire incidents during periods of extreme heat, and the evidence underpinning that assessment.

I continue to support LFB in adapting to the growing risks posed by climate change. My record investment in LFB has ensured that it is now better prepared, organised and equipped to fight wildfires and keep all Londoners safe. This includes improved training, new specialist wildfire response vehicles and the use of drones, specialist hoses and backpack blowers designed to protect people, property and green spaces. These improvements are helping to ensure the Brigade can

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meet the surge in demand it is experiencing during successive heatwaves. However, as heightened wildfire risk becomes an increasingly permanent feature of our climate, it is important that the Government provides sustainable long-term funding to ensure fire and rescue services have the resources and capabilities they need to respond effectively.

LFB has also strengthened its preparedness for periods of heightened wildfire risk through workforce planning and intelligence gathering, as well as close collaboration with London Resilience Partners. Weekly strategic forecast meetings bring together input from the Met Office, police, London Resilience Unit and other partners to assess risk and support resource planning, and daily meetings are chaired by LFB to review intelligence, refine planning assumptions and coordinate decision-making. Where evidence suggests an elevated risk, for example during a red heat warning, partnership arrangements can be escalated to support enhanced situational awareness and coordination. Coordinated activity this summer has included increased parks patrols, coordinated public messaging and enforcement of local byelaws.

In addition, LFB continuously monitors operational resources, incident data and emergency call demand. LFB's dynamic resourcing model allows resources to be redeployed across London in response to emerging incidents while maintaining emergency cover across the capital. This supports LFB in meeting its response standards and provides flexibility during periods of particularly high demand. Mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring fire and rescue services provide additional resilience where required, and these were used on more than 200 occasions during the recent period of prolonged heat and increased demand.

The effectiveness of these arrangements was demonstrated on 29 July, LFB's busiest operational day of 2026. LFB Control responded to more than 2,000 calls and answered more than 1,300 emergency calls in one day. Firefighters responded to 63 separate grass fires, including 12 incidents requiring more than four fire engines. Throughout this period, LFB maintained emergency response capability across London with specialist capabilities, including Terrain Support Vehicles providing off-road access and bespoke wildfire equipment also deployed as part of that response.

What assessment has been made (or is planned) of lessons arising from recent wildfire events in Europe and whether these have informed London's preparedness planning.

LFB is committed to continuous operational learning and routinely reviews lessons from significant incidents both in the UK and internationally. This includes receiving briefings from operational colleagues overseas from areas with extensive experience of managing large-scale wildfires to inform LFB's understanding of operational tactics.

Following the wildfires of July 2022, LFB undertook a comprehensive operational review, which identified a number of recommendations that have since informed investment in training, equipment, operational planning and wildfire tactics. A further review is taking place over the coming months, in recognition of the challenges faced during summer 2026, to identify any further lessons or areas for improvement.

LFB will continue to review further learning as it emerges from the recent wildfires across Europe this summer, alongside national learning, to ensure that London remains prepared for its evolving risk profile. Lessons are shared through the Joint Organisational Learning platform and the National Operational Learning system, ensuring that operational learning is disseminated more widely across both the fire and rescue and emergency services sectors. LFB has also adopted the latest National Operational Guidance for Wildfires and refined this into London-specific operational guidance and information notes for use during active incidents and firefighter training.

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What work is being undertaken with London boroughs, land managers, transport providers and other partners to reduce wildfire risk and communicate the risks to Londoners.

LFB works closely with local authorities, land managers, the Met Office and wider resilience partners to prepare for periods of heightened wildfire risk. Earlier this year, LFB wrote to all London boroughs encouraging proactive land management measures, including the creation of fire breaks to reduce the spread of wildfires. Recent incidents have demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach. At a significant fire in Orpington, fire breaks cut by the landowner helped limit the spread of the fire, while fire breaks created by the local authority also assisted in containing a major wildfire in Dagenham during summer 2025.

LFB's summer safety campaign has continued to encourage Londoners to avoid activities that can cause fires in open spaces, including the use of disposable barbecues and the careless disposal of cigarettes. I, along with partner agencies, have amplified these messages, supported by the London Resilience Communications Group, which helps coordinate consistent public messaging across London. Recent activity has included joint communications with partners on fires in the open, disposable barbecues, fire safety and water safety.

LFB's Transport team participates in Regional Development Group meetings with Network Rail and other stakeholders to review incidents and share best practice, including advice around vegetation management and wildfire prevention measures. In addition, LFB Borough Commanders take part in Borough Resilience Forums, where incidents are discussed and feedback is provided to rail authorities and other businesses as appropriate, enabling a targeted local approach across London's boroughs.

LFB and the Greater London Authority (GLA) will continue to look at ways to build on and improve coordination between partners to ensure London is as prepared as possible for the risk of wildfires.

What engagement has taken place with Government regarding the development of a national wildfire strategy.

LFB continues to engage with the Government, the National Fire Chiefs Council and other national partners on wildfire resilience and preparedness and to support operational learning and inform wider national policy development.

I welcome the new Prime Minister's recent announcement to hold a Wildfires Summit. The growing profile of wildfire risk was highlighted on 14 August, when a national wildfire alert was issued in response to heightened wildfire risk across parts of the UK following a prolonged period of hot, dry weather. Now is the time for us to make the case for a coordinated national approach to wildfire resilience.

In response, my Deputy Mayor for Fire, alongside the London Fire Commissioner, has recently written to the Government outlining the challenges faced by LFB and Fire and Rescue Services nationally over this summer and highlighting the need for a coordinated national response alongside adequate funding to address the increasing risks associated with wildfires.

What steps the GLA has taken to support and oversee the adoption of technologies that can improve wildfire prevention, detection and response in London (including early detection systems, predictive modelling tools and other emerging technologies).

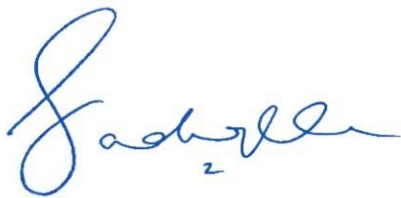
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Through the additional investment I have provided to LFB, it has introduced new technology and specialist equipment to improve wildfire response, including drones for situational awareness, Terrain Support Vehicles and Holey Hose systems. LFB continues to assess emerging technologies and operational innovations that could further strengthen wildfire prevention, detection and response, ensuring future investment remains evidence-led and operationally focused.

LFB also works closely with forecasting partners and other emergency services to monitor weather conditions and position resources proactively when periods of heightened wildfire risk are forecast. This includes access to the Met Office's Natural Hazards Partnership daily summary, which provides alerting and mapping relating to wildfire risk, heat, flooding and air quality, enabling resources to be prepared and deployed as risks emerge.

Thank you again for your letter and for highlighting these important issues. I hope that this response provides reassurance that significant work is being done to ensure London's preparedness for wildfires and other climate-related risks. I remain committed to ensuring LFB has the support and resources it needs to keep Londoners safe from this increasing area of risk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the 'h'.

Rt Hon Lord Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London