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LONDON ASSEMBLY

**Susan Hall AM****Chairman of the Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee**

Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner

(Sent by email)

18 November 2021

Dear Andy

London Assembly Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee: actions following meeting on 22 September 2021

I am writing to you on behalf of the London Assembly Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee following its meeting on 22 September 2021. At this meeting the Committee discussed the issues of building and fire safety and inclusion in the London Fire Brigade (LFB).

At the meeting, the Committee discussed the new enforcement measures that are being introduced in the Government's Building Safety Bill, currently before Parliament. We agreed that it will be critical to the LFB to ensure that building owners and managers are aware of these new measures and the costs that can be incurred in the event of non-compliance. **The Committee recommends that the LFB undertakes an awareness campaign for building owners and managers ahead of the implementation of the Bill to encourage compliance.**

The Committee was interested to hear of the LFB's ambitions and plans for increasing inclusion and diversity in the LFB and was encouraged to hear details of your Togetherness strategy and the work in progress to increase diversity in the workforce. However, we noted current levels of representation that are well below that achieved by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The Committee is keen to see the LFB make more progress. We heard that between 2019 to 2021 the

ratio for Black, Asian and minority Ethnic (BAME) staff increased from 10 per cent of the workforce to 33 per cent. Over the same period the ratio for female staff increased from 9 per cent to 22.8 per cent. However, diversity for top earners showed less improvement with BAME top earners joining the LFB increasing by a total of six between 2017 to 2021, whilst white top earners joining increased by 72. However, The percentage of BAME fire and rescue service staff top earners remains off target (13.1 per cent against a target of 16 per cent).

The Committee asked about targets currently set by the LFB for diversity of new recruits as compared with the challenging targets set by the Mayor for the MPS of 40 per cent for BAME and 50 per cent for females. You informed the Committee that current targets are those set in the London Safety Plan which is due to be replaced next year by the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). You accepted that it would be good for the LFB to set itself some ambitious stretch targets to aid the drive to increase diversity and support culture change. **The Committee recommends that the LFB set ambitious stretch diversity targets in the upcoming CRMP and looks at matching the targets set by the Met in due course. Reporting on diversity targets should be included in the LFB's quarterly performance digest.**

We also discussed the LFB's data recording for its LGBTQ+ and disabled staff. You acknowledged that this is not as detailed as for BAME and female staff. **The Committee recommends that recruitment and progression data recorded for LGBTQ+ staff and disabled staff is held at the same level of detail as other minority staff.**

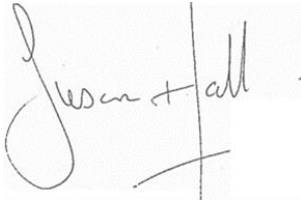
The Committee was pleased to hear about the extensive training now being undertaken and delivered to the LFB workforce to promote diversity and support culture change across the organisation. It was also good to hear that unconscious bias training and inclusion training are both mandatory and continuous, with your assurance that inclusion is a key part of professional practice. It was reassuring to learn that every member of staff is required to have an equality objective as part of the performance and talent process. We welcomed the leadership commitment to delivering change and, as a consequence, driving a more diverse and inclusive LFB. We are concerned, however, about whether there is sufficient staff resource to deliver such an ambitious change programme and the necessary training. **The Committee recommends that the Togetherness Board reviews the staff resources allocated to delivering the strategy to ensure that the LFB has the capacity and capability to achieve this and meet the targets within the required timescale/s.**

The Committee also discussed the LFB's outreach work and how that can help reach a more diverse future workforce, as well as understand some of the barriers underrepresented groups experience. **The Committee recommends that the LFB is more proactive in reaching out to local schools and informing them about the opportunities available in the LFB and help break down out of date views and stereotypes of what a firefighter does.**

The Committee was pleased to hear about the considerable investment in change and the work underway to achieve a truly diverse and inclusive LFB, although it see that there is clearly a lot of work to be done. We look forward to seeing ambitious targets for diversity set in the new CRMP and look forward to being updated about progress made.

I would appreciate a response to the recommendations and actions identified in this letter by 16 December 2021.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Susan Hall".

Susan Hall AM

Chairman of the Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee