

Report title

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## Improving stakeholder and community engagement

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Report to

Commissioner's Board  
Fire and Resilience Board

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Report by

Assistant Director of Communications

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### Summary

Improving stakeholder and community engagement is fundamental to London Fire Brigade's strategic direction, which includes transformational change and how the organisation responds to both the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase One report published on 30 October 2019 and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection recommendations published on 17 December 2019. This report sets out how stakeholder and community engagement can be improved, and proposes additional resource requirements recognising the wider transformational plans being developed in 2020 and with the structure subject to ongoing review.

### Recommended decision

That the London Fire Commissioner approves the formation of a stakeholder and community engagement team based within the communications department and the proposed additional resource requirements of £317k as set out in paragraph 23 and presented in appendix 1.

### Background

1. Following publication of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase One report on 30 October 2019, London Fire Brigade (the Brigade) must more effectively communicate how it is responding to the Chairman's recommendations and working to make London safer with London's communities (see paragraph 10 below) and a wide and influential stakeholder audience. The Brigade's actions, corporate approach, tone of communications and stakeholder liaison are important factors in getting these objectives right.
2. In addition to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry findings, the Brigade also received its first HMICFRS inspection report on 17 December 2019. The HMICFRS found that overall the Brigade 'requires improvement', concluding some of the same findings identified in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase One report.
3. Brigade officers will also develop a new Integrated Risk Management Plan (currently the London Safety Plan) in the coming months, with the existing plan due to end in March 2021. There is an opportunity to ensure that all of the learning and changes the Brigade has committed to are included and clearly explained in the new plan. Stakeholder engagement, working closely with the Strategy and Risk department (which leads on the production of the Brigade's Integrated

Risk Management Plan), and eventual public consultation on the new plan is therefore important and will need to be meaningful, effective and delivered with adequate resource.

### **Existing resource and expectations**

4. Despite increased demand since the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 additional public affairs resource has only included an increase of one half time to one full time Public Affairs Officer (FRS C grade). Current resource available and dedicated to public affairs and stakeholder engagement is just one Public Affairs Manager and one Public Affairs Officer.
5. The expectation of the new London Fire Commissioner working closely with the office of the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience, is for increased engagement with London's stakeholders and communities.
6. This follows recognition during 2018/19 of the benefits good public affairs activity has provided in assisting public and policy makers understanding of fire safety matters at both a pan London and ministerial level.
7. With an expectation from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Government, Mayor of London / Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience and Trades Unions for London Fire Brigade to provide frequent public reassurance on the measures we are taking to meet the challenges set out above, there is a strong need for greater engagement with London's communities and wider stakeholder engagement. To achieve this and ensure we meet our legal duties, adequate resources need to be made available for delivery.

### **Improving stakeholder and community engagement**

8. Over the last decade the Brigade has increased its profile and influence as London's fire and rescue service. There are a number of reasons for this including clearer understanding and expectations related to its functions under the Fire and Rescue Service Act (2004) and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005). Polling and consultations managed by the communications department consistently demonstrate a strong recognition of the Brigade.
9. Maintaining this profile in the face of the current challenges will assist in its ability to promote fire safety both to the public and policy makers. In order to maintain its profile and influence, the Brigade needs to deliver even more engagement with London's stakeholders along with the strategic management of community relations.
10. The Commissioner has set out his priorities in the coming year, which includes reaching out to all of London's communities, and especially the Grenfell Tower community.
11. Existing resources are fully engaged in already providing a wide ranging public affairs services. They deliver consultation activities, including: public affairs monitoring; coordinating response to Mayor's Questions; coordinating responses to public consultation; carrying out Brigade consultation where required; providing advice on parliamentary, GLA and local authority procedures; developing and implementing public affairs strategies.
12. Existing staff work with senior officers, including the Assistant Commissioner for Fire Safety and other senior officers, the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience and staff from this office, and maintain effective relationships with a range of external agencies, including local authorities, other emergency services and Government.

13. The small size of the current team limits the breadth of community engagement, public affairs and stakeholder and consultation activity that is possible and would be required to continue to support the Brigade's functions and aims.
14. A small team of two currently report to a Head of External Communications and Campaigns, who has extensive Public Affairs experience, but who is also responsible for all press office activity, digital communications and museum teams within the communications department, the latter requiring high levels of stakeholder engagement related to the development of a new museum.
15. Based on current resource levels there are many elements of community and stakeholder engagement and public consultation that are not being met or could be developed more fully to provide a more comprehensive public service in support of the Brigade's functions and aims.
16. Since the Grenfell Tower fire the Brigade has needed to manage and respond to greater levels of public scrutiny. The existing team has worked hard to ensure stakeholders (including policy makers) and London's communities understand the Brigade's role and position on a wide range of public safety matters. This has been effective in areas ranging from responding to major consultations on public safety and raising the profile of Brigade responses, to ensuring that briefings are available ahead of parliamentary debates, public meetings and media appearances. Again, as explained above there are more opportunities the Brigade is not able to tap into.
17. The creation of the stakeholder and community engagement team will be instrumental in developing and maintaining these relationships, working in partnership with London's communities, key stakeholders and external agencies including other emergency services and policy makers.

### **Proposed additional resource requirements**

18. Appendix 1 sets out a proposed structure, creating a Head of Stakeholder and Community Engagement at the lowest TMG grade. This grade is proposed in order for the Head of Stakeholder and Community Engagement to effectively lead and direct an organisational approach. This senior and experienced officer will take a lead role for the Brigade in developing and coordinating engagement with stakeholders and London's communities as well as leading the public affairs and external engagement activity for London Fire Brigade. Appointment to this post would be subject to normal competitive process.
19. A new and separately funded advisor to the Commissioner will work closely with the Head of Stakeholder and Community Engagement.
20. The stakeholder and community engagement team will include a Community Engagement Manager to develop wider consultation activity, including plans for public consultation on the next Integrated Risk Management Plan working closely with the Strategy and Risk department. Dedicated officers will develop and practically deliver a wider range of engagement and consultation activity.
21. A flagship offering from the Brigade will be a new museum, not only celebrating the Brigade's heritage and offering, but providing a unique opportunities for community interaction and engagement. Subject to ongoing review as the museum project develops, the Museum Curator will report to the Community Engagement Manager. The team will work within the stakeholder and community relations team managing liaison with the Mayor of London's Culture Team, Lambeth Council, the local community and stakeholders from museum industry.

22. It should be noted that museum fundraising requirements and commercial plans to develop merchandise for sale from the museum will be managed by the Head of Brand and Events.
23. Additional resources based on unit costs are outlined as follows. 1 x TMG C at unit cost of £104,563, 1 x FRS F at a unit cost of £66,149, 2 x FRS E at a unit cost of £53,219 and 1 x FRS C at a unit cost of £40,387. The total staff cost is approximately £317k per annum based on unit costs. These are staffing costs and do not include any funding that may be required for engagement and / or consultation activity e.g. later additional consultation tool costs that may or may not be required.

### **Further detail of how the proposed new resource will fit within existing structures**

24. A department organogram presented on page 11 of this report shows how the External Engagement and Community Engagement team will fit within and strengthen the existing department structure.
25. The creation of a Head of Stakeholder and Community Engagement will not only introduce an appropriately senior resource to lead on stakeholder and community engagement strategy, but as set out in paragraph 21 also be responsible for the development of a new museum and all associated stakeholder and community engagement necessary for the successful delivery of this project.
26. In creating this new resource the existing post of Head of External Communications and Campaigns (see organogram on page 11) will no longer hold responsibility for public affairs and the museum team (and new museum project), but continue to manage all media relations and digital communications (social media, website and other digital channels), and in addition take responsibility for the Brigade's essential internal communications, which currently reports to the Assistant Director because no alternative reporting structure has been possible. The Head of External Communication and Campaigns post will become Head of Media (Digital) and Internal Communications.
27. Consideration was given to adding the additional duties and responsibilities explained in this report to the existing post of Head of External Communications and Campaigns. However, the current responsibilities and expected outputs from heading up media, digital communications, public affairs and the museum have already been unrealistic, and adding further stakeholder relations, public affairs requirements and new community relations expectations would only add to this issue and not result in the additional outputs and service improvement needed.
28. It is therefore proposed that the Head of Stakeholder and Community Engagement reports to the Assistant Director of Communications, alongside an existing Head of Brand and Events, and Head of Media (digital) and Internal Communications.

### **Additional services provided by the External Engagement and Community Engagement team**

29. Table 1 below offers an overview of how the Brigade would increase its public affairs and community relations activity with the additional resource explained above, though further detail will become available as detailed stakeholder and community engagement are developed by the new team / resources.

30. Forming a properly resourced stakeholder and community engagement team within the communications department would lead to further advice and support for all Brigade departments carrying out external stakeholder and community engagement activities. It is very much the intention that the stakeholder and community engagement team maintains responsibility for the overall coordination of Brigade stakeholder and community engagement working closely with the Commissioner's office, relevant departments and key external agencies. Creating a team with a more clearly defined remit seeks to assist and benefit the whole Brigade.
31. The creation of community engagement staff will provide the organisation with dedicated resource to lead on significant community relations plans for a range of purposes, including following large or major incidents. Providing an immediate resource to consider how the Brigade should work with partners, community groups or individual affected, and liaising with key agencies and partners, including other emergency services, the Mayor of London and Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience and government departments.
32. The resource would also plan and deliver community liaison for key projects and take a lead role in developing plans for public consultation (not only on the Brigade's four yearly Integrate Risk Management Plan, but also other consultations that are currently impossible to deliver in year), public opinion research and polling e.g. YouGov polling.
33. This activity is distinct from the community relations activity of firefighters conducting Home Fire Safety Visits or other forms of community safety interaction and also the services of community outreach officers based in the Community Safety directorate e.g. for equality / recruitment purposes. The additional resource would however provide the added benefit of providing key messages and ensuring they filter into other forms of community interaction, especially during periods of public consultation i.e. for the Brigade's Integrated Risk Management Plan proposals which would affect how the Brigade delivers all of its public services.
34. The addition of a Public Affairs officer to increase the existing resources to three people will ensure that there are sufficient resources to properly plan and increase this work, which as described above has provided significant benefits, allowing increased stakeholder relations and a full programme of activity working with borough commanders and others as presented below.
35. Table 1 – Examples of increased stakeholder and community engagement activity.

	<b>Additional (increased activity in the area described) and new activity to be managed by the stakeholder and community engagement team</b>	
1	Briefings and public affairs advice for Area Managers (Deputy Assistant Commissioners) and Borough Commanders (Group Managers), including assistance in preparation for their public meetings or meetings with local authorities.	Additional
2	Coordination of and attendance at an annual programme of Borough meetings with local authorities, central government and other agencies as appropriate, including attendance of Borough Commander / Senior Officer / Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience however appropriate.	New
3	Improved delivery and understanding of campaign messaging to Area Managers and Borough Commanders using existing or new internal communication channels.	Additional
4	Coordination of and attendance at meetings sought with / requested by central government, policy makers and the London Fire Commissioner /	Additional

	senior officers.	
5	Greater preparation and coordination of consultation on the Brigade's Integrated Risk Management Plan (expected during 2020).	Additional
6	Brigade led consultations outside of and in addition to consultation on the Brigade's Integrated Risk Management Plan i.e. other work the Brigade wishes to deliver and seek views on.	New
7	Increased parliamentary work (specific primary legisaton relating to fire safety is expected in coming parliaments which will require more detailed Bill work than has been needed in over a decade).	Additional
8	Planning and full coodination of Brigade led corporate events to bring stakeholders into the Brigade to learn more about its work, in addition to officers accepting external invitations e.g at APPGs.	New
9	Stakeholder management of and liason with key community groups for specific projects or issues e.g. Grenfell Tower community liaison.	New
10	Devise, maintain and report on a London Fire Brigade public affairs strategy that internal and external stakeholders can access, understand and monitor.	New
11	As part of the above public affairs strategy, work to both raise awareness of and improve the use of the Brigade's stakeholder mapping, revising how the database is produced and maintained.	Additional
12	A more structured programme of public / stakeholder opinion, understanding and measurement e.g. YouGov polling.	Additional
13	Coordination of an annual programme of events and speaking opportunities for officers with expertise, directors and the London Fire Commissioner.	New
14	Coordination of political visits to Brigade premises e.g. requests from the London Assembly (including FREP), Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience and Members of Parliament.	Additional
15	Production of reports and materials which demonstrate the impact London Fire Brigade is making and how its professional voice is being heard and acted upon.	New
16	To develop a plan for greater recognition of Brigade achievements and actions e.g. facility / demonstration visits and applications for external awards.	New

## Measuring outputs and impact

36. In 2020/21 the Assistant Director of Communications is introducing a range of performance measures to demonstrate the outputs and value of the different communications delivered by the Brigade, including its internal communications, digital communications and media activity / reach. The stakeholder and community engagement resource would include performance monitoring and reporting, not least of all to assess the quantity and impact of the activities listed above. Specific key performance indicators would be developed.

## Timetable for recruitment

37. The reasons for resource requirements are outlined above and as a result of the corporate expectation, resources are needed at the earliest opportunity. Key stakeholder activity is already well underway, including work to ensure the Brigade reaches out to and works with the Grenfell

Tower community and associated partners. This work cannot be delayed, but does mean that other essential activities and responsibilities are being affected e.g. media / digital planning, campaigns, improvements required to internal communications and media / digital monitoring and reporting.

38. The planned recruitment timetable is set out below:

<b>Recruitment timetable</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Immediately (March / April advertisement)	Head of Stakeholder and Community Engagement	TMG C
Immediately (March / April advertisement)	Community Engagement Manager	FRS F
Immediately (April advertisement)	Senior Public Affairs Officer	FRS E
When the Community Engagement Manager is appointed (advertisement now expected June / July)	Consultation Officer	FRS E
When the Community Engagement Manager is appointed (advertisement now expected June / July)	Consultation / Engagement Officer	FRS C

#### Finance comments

39. This report recommends that the LFC approves the formation of a stakeholder and community engagement team, at a total cost of £317k for five posts. This additional growth did not form part of the budget submission to the Mayor, and if approved will be included as part of the final March 2020/21 LFC Budget report. The report also sets out examples of the increased stakeholder and community engagement, which could also result in additional financial pressures and will be contained within existing resources.
40. It should also be noted that the £317k pressure only includes direct staff costs, and that desk space will need to be reviewed for the new posts.

#### Workforce comments

41. Increased stakeholder engagement will assist the relationship with all Trades Unions, seeking to maintain and build on the improved relations that currently exist.
42. Representatives from all Trades Unions will form part of all stakeholder mapping and activity, as indicated in paragraph six above.
43. Changes to the staffing establishment will be subject to staff side consultation.

#### Legal comments

44. Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (the "Commissioner") 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 Commissioner specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.

45. Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that the Commissioner is the fire and rescue authority for Greater London.
46. By direction dated 1 April 2018, the Mayor set out those matters, for which the Commissioner would require the prior approval of either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (the "Deputy Mayor"). Paragraph (b) of Part 2 of the said direction requires the Commissioner 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 Deputy Mayor's approval is accordingly required for the spending detailed in this report.
47. Under section 6 of the FRSA 2004 the Commissioner "must make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety in its area". In making such provision the Commissioner must "in particular, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, make arrangements for ... the provision of information, publicity and encouragement in respect of the steps to be taken to prevent fires and death or injury by fire".
48. In accordance with Section 5A of the FRSA 2004, the Commissioner, being a 'relevant authority,' may do "(a) anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying-out of any of its functions (its 'functional purposes'), (b) anything it considers appropriate for purposes incidental to its functional purposes, (c) anything it considers appropriate for purposes indirectly incidental to its functional purposes through any number of removes".
49. Under section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) the Commissioner (which is to be treated as a local authority for the purposes of s112 by action of s146A of the LGA 1972), "shall appoint such officers as they think necessary for the proper discharge by the authority of such of their or another authority's functions as fall to be discharged by them... An officer appointed ... shall hold office on such reasonable terms and conditions, including conditions as to remuneration, as the authority appointing him think fit."
50. The Commissioner is required, by sections 4 and 6 of the Local Government Act 1986 (LGA 1986), to have regard to the contents of 'The Code Of Recommended Practice On Local Authority Publicity' when undertaking any publicity. Section 6 of the LGA 1986 defines publicity as "any communication in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or a section of the public". The proposals in this report comply with the requirements of this Code.

#### Sustainability implications

51. The implications of increased stakeholder and community engagement are that further resource is available to identify and advise on political implications and public consultation, and ensure that Brigade progress in this area is communicated to or between key stakeholders even more effectively.
52. There are no other direct implications on sustainability from the creation of this resource.

#### Equalities implications

53. The London Fire Commissioner and decision takers are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 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.



54. 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.
55. 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, Sexual orientation.
56. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us, in the exercise of all our functions (i.e. everything we do), to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
  - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
  - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
57. 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:
- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic;
  - (b) 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 (;
  - (c) 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.
58. 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.

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—

- (a) tackle prejudice, and
  - (b) promote understanding.
59. In carrying out its function, the LFC must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and as part of that there is a requirement to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic. This enhanced team will support the LFC in meeting their obligations in relation to fostering good relations with and between a wide range of diverse community groups.

60. A further important outcome of having a dedicated stakeholder and community engagement function is to assist the wider Brigade plans for transformational change, including matters such as the introduction of a new behaviour framework and plans to further improve equalities. This work is especially relevant in relation to how Group Managers, Deputy Assistant Commissioners and senior officers will be supported and advised by the stakeholder and community engagement team on corporate priorities and messaging. Inclusion and equality issues are central to these revised cultural changes.

61. All new appointments as presented in Appendix 1 will be subject to competitive recruitment process.

#### List of Appendices

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Protective Marking</b>
1.	<b>Proposed structure chart</b>	

<b>Name/role</b>	<b>Method consulted</b>
Tim Powell, Assistant Director of People Services	Email
Kathy Robinson, General Counsel	Meeting and emails
Adrian Bloomfield, Assistant Director of Finance	Email
Susan Ellison Bunce, Assistant Director of Strategy and Risk	Discussion

Appendix 1 – Department Organogram (Stakeholder and Community Engagement team fully expanded for clarity and to include grades)

