



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Report title

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## 8 Albert Embankment/Lambeth Fire Station Condition – Investment and Maintenance

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### Report to

Commissioner's Board  
Operational Delivery Board  
Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board  
London Fire Commissioner

### Date

6 April 2022  
20 April 2022  
26 April 2022

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### Report classification

### For Decision

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following London Fire Brigade (LFB) strategic priorities.

### Best place to work

The objective of this report is to confirm estimated unprogrammed costs to rectify fabric defects within former LFB Headquarters at 8 Albert Embankment (8AE), which includes Lambeth Fire Station, to the required standard.

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Report number – LFC-0690

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For Publication

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## PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DECISION-MAKER

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### Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to secure the required capital investment to halt the current deterioration of the former LFB headquarters building at 8AE. This paper also notes the planned improvement works to mitigate various building condition concerns and assure continued operational delivery from Lambeth Fire Station. The proposals in this report are designed to mitigate risk in the medium term only (circa 3-5 years) ahead of the planned site redevelopment in accordance with the current Development Agreement (DA).

LFB vacated the former headquarters building in 2008, however Lambeth Fire Station remains operational on this site, providing strategic emergency response cover for key risks within central London. Since that time, the ongoing expectation of future redevelopment resulted in a significant reduction in investment in the building fabric and systems. Facilities maintenance has focused on meeting reactive and compliance maintenance requirements pending redevelopment. Intrusive

surveys in 21/22 to review areas of concrete spalling have confirmed the exterior of the building has developed concrete derogation and LFB officers are in the process of engaging with Historic England (HE) to confirm obligations on LFB in preserving the condition of the Grade II listed building.

Investment to undertake remedial work is recommended as the premises remains the planned future site for Lambeth Fire Station and there is an opportunity for the building condition to be reflected in the Development Agreement or any future disposal terms. Temporary scaffolding and propping measures are in place to assure the safety of the site to support continued service delivery from Lambeth fire station and protection of the public. These measures are interim and not designed to continue for the length of the current redevelopment timescales, which are difficult to estimate due to the need to secure planning permission for development of a viable design.

For the Deputy Mayor

That the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience authorises the London Fire Commissioner to commit capital expenditure for up to the amount set out in the Part 2 report for the purpose of remedial works in respect of the former LFB Headquarters building/Lambeth Fire Station at 8 Albert Embankment.

*This LFC decision will only be taken after further consultation with the Greater London Authority's finance and legal advisers and Corporate Investment Board.*

For the London Fire Commissioner

The London Fire Commissioner delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Property and the Assistant Director of Finance to implement the capital funding strategy for remedial works in respect of 8AE as detailed in Part 2 of this report.

The London Fire Commissioner delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Property to commit capital expenditure in line with the agreed capital funding strategy up to the amount set out in the Part 2 report.

## **Introduction and background**

1. In January 2022, LFC 0656 provided an update on initial discussions with U+i following the decision to refuse planning permission for the U+i/LFB scheme at 8AE. This included a recommendation to extend the long-stop date in the Development Agreement by 6 months to 27 April 2022 as an enabler to support discussions. Negotiations are currently progressing with full involvement from internal stakeholders on revisions to the scheme.
2. Recent reports and the site condition surveys in 2021/22 have highlighted the deteriorating condition of the former LFB headquarters building and the need to propose an investment plan that represents value for money in the context of the wider development plan. This is required to assure the safety of the building and protect the provision of continuous

operational delivery from Lambeth Fire Station. Any plan requiring works to the building needs to ensure LFB, as the freeholder, meet any obligations to preserve the condition of the Grade II listed building. This will mitigate any risk of the building's inclusion on Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk' Register or incurring financial penalties as a result of listed building offences where conditions are not adhered to.

3. The most significant concern on condition is the fabric and concrete derogation throughout the former headquarters building which shows signs of decay from hairline cracks to areas of multiple cracking. This has been reassessed through a specialist survey which has immediately required external areas of the station to be made safe with propping works and areas of the yard being cordoned off to staff. Scaffolding and netting has been erected to protect all identified areas of risk.
4. To date, Property department have absorbed the costs of the interim scaffolding/propping safety provisions within revenue budgets and weekly checks are undertaken to monitor the position. This has restricted the maintenance budget available to undertake other planned works across LFB's estate. These costs are detailed in Part 2 alongside further anticipated revenue costs in 2022/23 pending the completion of remedial works required.
5. A fortnightly working group with operational colleagues has been established to manage and mitigate the immediate impacts on service delivery pending agreement of an investment plan.
6. In addition, condition surveys highlighted that the building is designed to be supplied by 3 on site boilers, however two are decommissioned and beyond economical repair. A single boiler is functioning for the whole site with no resilience in place due to the age and condition of the parts required. A loss of heating and hot water could take the Lambeth station off the run. This risk has been effectively mitigated through enablement works to support a boiler hire solution if needed and works to replace the boiler have a confirmed programme in place commencing April 2022. This has been funded from the LFB's capital budget.
7. Over time, decisions on planned preventative maintenance have aligned with ongoing redevelopment plans. This has resulted in the internal fabric of the fire station (decoration, resting and washing facilities, furniture, flooring etc.) deteriorating to a point where remedial work is required to improve and promote a functional and healthy working environment for crews based at Lambeth fire station.
8. Other low to medium risk areas were noted as an outcome of condition surveys and several specialist surveys will be required to quantify a full scope of works predominantly around the fabric elements of the building to inform further remedial actions. It is planned to assess these when the outcomes of current negotiations on a revised development agreement are known and more accurate timescales for the ongoing occupation of the former HQ building can be confirmed.
9. Significant capital and revenue funding is required to support the range of remedial works identified. Specific objectives, progress and financial impacts are detailed below.

## **Objectives and expected outcomes**

The objective of this report is to confirm estimated unprogrammed costs to rectify concrete fabric defects within the former headquarters building to a standard which assures a minimum level safety for LFB staff and the wider public whilst protecting continued operational delivery.

## **Fabric defects/remedial solutions – proposed approach**

10. To understand the scope and cost of any remedial solutions in resolving the concrete derogation, a three-stage approach has been commenced by Property department's main technical contractor, with a hold point/review at the end of each stage to agree further actions. A range of intrusive surveys are planned to accurately confirm the extent of remedial works required. The technical contractor will also lead engagement with Historic England to understand any limitations and/or requirements on any of the concrete and other remedial works required.
11. The funding proposal to support delivery of identified remedial works, which are currently unfunded within the capital programme, has been the subject of discussion by lead officers within Property and Finance departments resulting in the following proposal.
12. In 2020 LFC - 0379 authorised a capital budget for the refurbishment of Lambeth River Station (see Part 2 report). Since that time the major capital projects team have demonstrated there is significant operational, financial and reputational risk attached to removing the river station pontoon to a dry dock and using a temporary pontoon and Lambeth Fire Station to accommodate Lambeth River Station crews. Despite two procurement exercises, the Project Board has been unable to appoint a delivery partner for this project due to the limited market depth and availability for this bespoke asset.
13. A dive survey in February 2022 has confirmed that Lambeth River Station can be maintained and enhanced to achieve many of the Project Initiation Document objectives in situ for a reduced capital budget commitment. Adopting this route would extend the useful life of Lambeth River Station for a minimum of 5 years. As a result, the Lambeth River Station project board agreed a change of scope for this project at its last meeting in February 2022.
14. Looking ahead, the current Lambeth River Station project has committed to use the design work to date to provide a cost estimate for a new River Station based on a standardised modular build which would be significantly easier to repair and maintain than the current design. Once the final design and delivery timing of the new Lambeth Fire Station within the 8AE redevelopment design is known, this will enable LFB to consider whether funding would be sought for a new river station or whether river station crews could be accommodated successfully within Lambeth Fire Station as part of a revised operational delivery model.

## **Workplace**

15. The fortnightly working group with operational representation has informed and monitored progress regarding agreed actions to address identified risks raised as part of recent condition surveys. A benefit of this group is the enhanced communication achieved with operational officers in providing assurance on planned solutions. In addition, consultation with station based personnel and informed by current estimated redevelopment timescales,

a limited programme of minor improvements funded by Property's revenue budget has been agreed to improve workplace conditions. These consist of:

- Redecoration of agreed areas and improvements to wall displays/noticeboards
- Redecoration of kitchen/mess area with replacement furniture
- Deep cleaning of flooring and curtains and replacement easy chairs.

16. In summary, the current redevelopment position has informed the financial investment required as detailed in Part 2 to: -

- prevent continued harm and assure LFB's obligations in maintaining the Grade II listed building,
- protect operational delivery and invest in LFB's key objective to re-provide a new Lambeth Fire Station and LFB Museum as part of 8AE redevelopment, and
- respond to the opportunity of ensuring any capital investment in building condition can be reflected in the revised Development Agreement or as part of any future disposal terms.

### **Equality comments**

17. The LFB and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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.
22. 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.
23. 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.
24. This report is requesting agreement on a capital funding strategy to support remedial works required for this LFC freehold site earmarked for redevelopment. An updated Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be undertaken for any changes to the museum and station design and specification should revisions to the Development Agreement be achieved. These will be covered in detail once a viable proposal is available for governance decision.

## **Other Considerations**

### *Workforce comments*

25. There is ongoing workforce consultation with operational officers to protect operational delivery from this site and improve workplace conditions as set out in paragraph 10 of this report. In addition, the Borough Commander and Station Commander continue to engage with local FBU representatives to update on the project impacts and how the crews can best be supported.

### *Sustainability comments*

26. This report notes the unviable economic position in replacing the current gas boiler with a sustainable electric solution system in consideration of the LFB target for net zero at a site due for redevelopment. This is due to the extensive system replacement that would be required throughout the building.

It should be noted that a redeveloped 8AE site will remove any reliance on gas and deliver a sustainable energy provision within the revised scheme. On the temporary decant of Lambeth fire station as part of the redevelopment programme, the replacement boiler will be removed to support fallback arrangements to fire stations across the estate ahead of carbon net zero delivery.

### *Procurement comments*

27. Paper 2 details the requirement for capital expenditure to determine the scope of works and cost of remedial works to repair fabric defects in line with Historic England requirements. This professional service is being provided by Tetra Tech, LFBs contracted technical advisors and the any resulting specification for agreed remedial works will be competitively tendered in accordance with the Scheme of Governance Part 3 Standing Orders relating to Procurement. Where possible this will include a combination of current contracts, specific collaborative contracts once the precise requirements have been identified or a selection of appropriate contractors using LFB's E-tendering portal.

#### Financial comments

28. This report recommends the capital investment to rectify fabric defects within former LFB Headquarters at 8 Albert Embankment. The financial impact of this work and required maintenance is set out in Part 2 of this report.

#### Legal comments

29. 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.
30. 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").
31. 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...".
32. The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by section 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, under which the London Fire Commissioner, being a 'relevant authority', may do 'anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying out of any of its functions'.
33. The proposed procurement routes for the discussed in this report are compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the London Fire Commissioner's Scheme of Governance (Part 3 Standing Orders Relating to Procurement).

#### List of Appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential
1.	None	

**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**

Judith Cosaitis has drafted this report and confirms the following:

**Assistant Director/Head of Service**

Laura Birnbaum has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to Board for consideration.

**Advice**

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

Karen Boother Legal Advisor, on behalf of General Counsel (Head of Law and Monitoring Officer)

David O'Sullivan, Financial Advisor, on behalf of the Chief Finance Officer