

GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR FIRE & RESILIENCE DECISION – DMFD38

Title: Role-to-Rank (R2R) Agreement Implementation

Executive Summary:

The London Fire Brigade (LFB) and the London Region Fire Brigades Union (FBU) have resolved a long-running and disruptive industrial dispute, agreeing to operational staff structure reforms—the Role-to-Rank (R2R) reforms—that will deliver a reduction in officer standby moves, improved operational cover resulting in more appliances being available at key times of the day (shift change); improved training and development; fairer career pathways; and stronger staff management for watch-based teams. Report LFC-0202 to the London Fire Commissioner seeks approval to confirm and delegate the implementation of the Role-to-Rank agreement to the Deputy Commissioner for Operations, at an additional annual cost of up to £525,000.

The Commissioner's Board have considered and recommended the proposal to the Commissioner, who has indicated in-principle support pending prior consent to spend from the Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience also considered the proposals to the Commissioner in report FRB-0063 at her Fire and Resilience Board on 6 August 2019 and indicated her support.

The London Fire Commissioner Governance Direction 2018 sets out a requirement for the London Fire 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".

Decision:

The Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience approves the ongoing annual expenditure of up to £525,000 for the implementation of the Role-to-Rank agreement as described in report LFC-0202 to the London Fire Commissioner.

Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

19/09 /2019

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The London Fire Brigade (LFB) was in a long-running industrial dispute regarding the contractual obligations of crew managers since 2012 with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) that had led to the development of a complicated and inefficient system of rules and allowances in an attempt to ensure that stations remain on the run and fire appliances are always available to be deployed to incidents. That dispute followed a national change in staff structures—to move from a rank-based structure to a role-based structure in 2003/04—that was intended to deliver a reduction in ‘standby moves’ so that crew managers could ‘cover’ for absent watch managers. An officer standby move is where an officer from another fire station has to travel to a station where there is an officer shortage in order to keep the fire station available for operational cover.
- 1.2. However, this was not enshrined in national agreements and the nature of this ‘cover’ was not defined—and the reforms were never fully accepted by the FBU. When LFB moved from rank-to-role in 2005, this disagreement continued, eventually resolving by a compromise agreement with cover only provided at the acting up staff’s own station, and then only for a maximum of eight consecutive shifts. The separate arrangements for cover at other fire stations unravelled in the 2010 shift-pattern industrial dispute. The contractual issue regarding crew managers was only resolved with the implementation of the crew manager plus (CM+) scheme; however, this was a voluntary scheme.
- 1.3. As a result of these arrangements, the Brigade has been reliant on staff volunteering to ‘act up’ as watch managers—a vulnerability when seeking to keep required stations and appliances ‘on the run’ and operationally available. Alongside making operational resources unavailable, the lack of consistent station leadership disruption to watch-based activities and management including training and development, assessments, community engagement work, and other officer-led routines, suffered.
- 1.4. The role-based structure has also limited career pathways for specialist officers, who can find themselves outside of the promotion channels of their peers.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The reforms proposed by report LFC-0202 to the London Fire Commissioner are a move away from the role-based structure of crew managers and watch managers to the tried and tested rank-based structure—Firefighter, Leading Firefighter, Sub Officer and Station Officer. These reforms deliver a large number of very significant benefits—perhaps most notably a transformative reduction in expensive officer standby movements and real improvements in the management of watches—including the critical watch-led training.
- 2.2. Empowering lower ranks in making and dealing with local decisions, removing the need for unnecessary escalation is a key aim of the R2R reforms. The 2015 staff survey saw staff expressing their concerns about the number of standby movements that they were required to perform and the lack of officer consistency on watches on a day-to-day basis. This has had an impact on staff seeking promotion.
 - 1) The current structure generates 11,516 officer standby moves annually at a cost of £500kpa; the R2R Agreement will reduce this to 3,920 moves annually.
 - 2) A cost saving of circa £316kpa due to the reduction of expensive officer standby moves by approximately 66 per cent.
 - 3) A cost saving of £88kpa with the removal of the CM+ scheme .

- 4) A cost saving of £30kpa with a refinement to firefighter 'hat and plus' (FF[^] and FF+) schemes relating to specific roles undertaken.
 - 5) Improved appliance availability at key times (shift change).
 - 6) All stations will now be managed by a Station Officer or Sub Officer at all times, improving local leadership.
 - 7) Agreeing the contractual obligations of Crew Managers to deputise, be in charge of a station and redeploy appliances which had been running since 2012 has finally been achieved.
 - 8) Greater clarity around duties and levels of responsibilities for all ranks at fire stations.
 - 9) Improved supervision at operational incidents.
 - 10) Improved release of officers for training by circa 60 per cent.
 - 11) Improve the consistent development and training of watch-based staff by their own watch officers.
- 2.3. The R2R Agreement states that the first Sub Officer or Station Officer arriving at scene will assume the Incident Commander (IC) role at all incidents up to and including four fire appliances. If a Sub Officer is the first in attendance and a Station Officer subsequently attends, the Station Officer will initially undertake a monitoring role to lead, guide and support the IC.
- 2.4. The introduction of the monitoring officer role for Station Officers will allow Sub Officers to develop and remain in charge of incidents whilst being supported and monitored—seen by all as an important improvement to incident command management and safety on the fire ground.
- 2.5. We will now see a Station Officer monitoring a four-pump incident within six minutes rather than a Station Manager arriving in an average of 17 minutes—a significant improvement.
- 2.6. This project has and will continue to incur one off project and implementation costs over the three financial years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 currently estimated at £797k. This includes a total of £375k in operational staff costs, which will be contained within the LFB's overall operational staff budget in each year.
- 2.7. The remaining £422k includes £186k in other staff costs and £236k in non-staff costs, such as changes to systems and training courses. This total cost of £422k includes £111k that has been incurred in 2017/18 and 2018/19 and £311k that is forecast to be incurred in 2019/20. An earmarked reserve has already been established for this project with remaining funds of £361k which exceeds the funding required.
- 2.8. The project implementation costs have been scoped over a three-year financial period:
- a) Operational staffing costs Year 1 September 2017 to March 2018 (part year), one Station Manager (six months) £37k, one Station Manager (three months) £19k – Total cost £56k, Year 2 April 2018 to March 2019, two Station Managers – £149k, Year 3 April 2019 to March 2020, two Station Managers – £170k, total staffing costs £375k. Operational staffing costs will be contained within the overall operational staffing budget in each year.
 - b) Other staff costs – £186k (Year 1, £7k; Year 2, £84k; Year 3, £95k).
 - c) Changes to 65 LFB IT systems – £100k.
 - d) Changes to Babcock training materials – £100k.
 - e) Development costs for two new training packages for the station officer rank (£9k) and firefighter acting up package (£9k) – Total cost £18k.
 - f) Uniform changes and rank insignia changes £18k (which will be funded within the existing station uniform budgets).

Total Project Costs (including operational staff):

	2017/18 £k	2018/19 £k	2019/20 £k	Total £k
Project team operational staff costs	56	149	170	375
Project team other staff costs	7	84	95	186
Changes required to LFB IT/systems	0	20	80	100
Changes to training materials	0	0	100	100
Two new training packages, firefighter acting up package and additional training for Station Officers enhanced Incident Command Training	0	0	18	18
Procurement of LFF one bar rank markings	0	0	4	4
Alteration to undress uniform (532)	0	0	14	14
Total	63	305	441	797

Cashable Savings

- 2.9. Changes to the 'hanging on' requirement for the Officer-In-Charge (OIC) will have an impact where the OIC will only be required to remain on-station after a shift has completed to wait for the cover officer to arrive for one hour; currently they must 'hang on' indefinitely. Estimated annual savings are based on the 2018/19 figures which identified that there were 3,212 occasions that an OIC had to remain on station for an average of two hours and fifteen minutes. This incurs a cost calculated at £184kpa. When the R2R Agreement is implemented, a potential saving of £156k per annum will be realised when the requirements reduce to one hour.
- 2.10. The model has predicted a reduction in officer standby movements of approximately 66 per cent which will see a saving of £316kpa and a reduction of standby movements and increasing operational availability at key times of the day.

	Annual Savings £k
A reduction in the number of times that officers in charge will be required to keep appliances on the run at the end of their shift (hanging on) will see a potential saving of £156k pa	156
A 66% reduction in standby movements (OIC) is anticipated	316
Removal of the Crew Manager+ scheme	88
Removal of the Firefighter+ and ^ schemes	27
Total	587

Non cashable savings

- 2.11. The impact of lost course places not being allocated to crew managers and watch managers is significant.
- 2.12. The data for the period 1 April 2016 to 15 November 2018 has shown:
- the overall cost to the LFB was £34k in total lost training for these two critical roles;

b) this equates to a £13kpa cost; and

c) once the implementation of the R2R Agreement takes place in October 2019 there is a predicted 60 percent improvement in officer release, offering a £8kpa saving.

2.13. When the LFB is unable to release Strategic Resource (SR) on time this has an impact on appliances and staff attending training events as well.

2.14. The data for 2017/18 has shown:

a) Lost courses due to appliances not arriving on time was £2k;

b) Courses lost where appliances did not attend was £31k;

c) Total cost for SR training lost was £33k factoring in the predicted 60 percent improvement in officer release we anticipate a £20kpa saving; and

d) The total cost for lost WM and CM training plus lost SR training in 2017/18 was £67k.

	2020/21 £k
Unfilled training places at Crew Manager and Watch Manager level due to failure to release officers from stations	8
LFB non provision class related due to lost training not carried out on Strategic Resource (S/R) (Appliances arrived late unable to meet course objectives)	1
LFB non provision class related due to lost training not carried out on Strategic Resource (S/R). (Appliances failed to attend training events no show).	19
Total	28

Ongoing Budget Growth

2.15. With the implementation of the Sub Officer rank the Brigade will keep the same number of personnel currently at fire stations, however the distribution across the new station based ranks will differ in line with the reduction of Leading Firefighter establishment by 140 (currently Crew Managers) and increase in Sub Officer establishment by 140 (currently Watch Manager As). This will result in an ongoing budget pressure of £490k.

2.16. There will be an increase in acting up payments as both Firefighter and Leading Firefighters are required to act up in order to be eligible for promotion, Sub Officers are required to act up indefinitely. The revised acting up arrangements will result in projected payments of £98k in the first year and an ongoing impact of £77k.

2.17. The removal of the development rate of pay for Leading Firefighters, Sub Officer and Station Officer ranks will result in an additional cost of £546k. It should be noted however that the impact on organisation expenditure of staff on development rates of pay can vary significantly from year-to-year depending on actual numbers of promotions. The pressure of £546k is a prudent estimate and would have been reduced to by £147k to a £399k pressure if just based on 2018/19 figures.

Ongoing salary cost

Payments	Role based structure £k	2019 R2R structure £k	Impact £k
Additional Costs			
Leading Firefighter, Sub Officer and Station Officer salaries	234,920	235,410	490
Development rate of pay	0	546	546
Acting up payments	21	98	77
Total Additional Costs	234,941	236,054	1,113
Ongoing Savings			
Standby payments	479	163	(316)
Hanging on payments	184	28	(156)
Crew Manager Plus scheme	88	0	(88)
Firefighter Hat and Firefighter Plus scheme	27	0	(27)
Total Ongoing Savings	778	191	(587)
Total	235,720	236,245	525
Total ongoing budget pressure			525

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The Public Sector Equality Duty – and the potential impacts of this decision on those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation) – has been considered by the London Fire Commissioner and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience.
- 3.2. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Commissioner and the Deputy Mayor when they make decisions. The duty requires them to have regard to the need to:
 - a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful.
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 3.3. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 3.4. The equality impact assessment performed for by the R2R project team indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse effect on any persons underrepresented groups.
- 3.5. The impact assessment looking at underrepresented groups that currently carry out acting up arrangements to Crew Manager. The number of firefighters that are currently risk assessed to carry out acting up to Crew Manager is 195. The percentage breakdown of each group against the firefighter composition of the workforce can be seen from the table below. LFB have nine members of female staff that are currently risk assessed and act up to Crew Manager which is 4.61 per cent of the

risk assessed group. This is compared against a total percentage of female staff of 7.59 per cent. The percentage of female staff taking the opportunity to act up is lower than the percentage at both firefighter and Crew Manager ranks meaning that in time the percentage at CM rank may reduce.

- 3.6. It can be seen from the table below that LFB have 27 risk assessed Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity (BAME) staff out of a group of 195, 13.85 per cent of those who currently act up. The percentage of BAME staff taking up the opportunity to act up is higher than the percentage at CM rank, meaning that in time this will support an increase in the percentage of BAME officers at the higher ranks. Minor improvement is needed to see the percentage of acting up match or exceed the percentage at firefighter level.

Current staff breakdown regarding acting up figures

Group	Number of staff risk assessed for Crew Manager acting up	Percentage risk assessed for Crew Manager acting up	Percentage of Firefighter composition	Percentage of Crew Manager composition
Female	9	4.61%	7.59%	5.36%
Male	186	95.38%	92.41%	94.64%
	195			
BAME	27	13.85%	14.66%	10.02%
Not Known	2	1.03%	1.23%	1.86%
White	166	85.13%	84.11%	88.11%
	195			

- 3.7. Additional training introduced as part of R2R implementation means all staff acting up will receive the same level of incident command training as substantively promoted officers and they will receive this training prior to undertaking the role—a critical improvement. Firefighters and leading firefighters who act up will also have the opportunity to act up at their own fire station first, before the option to act up at another station. This means that they have the ability to act up initially with the support and supervision of their own crew members, Station Officer or Sub Officer.
- 3.8. Work will be started to look at developing targeted mentors and coaches for staff from all underrepresented groups wishing to act up. LFB identify stations and watches with suitable Sub Officer or Station Officer mentors and coaches who are well placed to support staff and give them that additional confidence whilst they are acting up. Post-implementation of R2R, work will continue to further develop this concept with talent, recruitment, and cultural change teams.

4. Other considerations

Workforce

- 4.1. The Trades Unions have been consulted throughout the negotiations to agree to the terms and conditions of the R2R agreement.
- 4.2. The LFB and the London Region FBU commenced negotiations to improve the 2017 R2R Agreement in January 2019. The discussions were concluded on Thursday 2 May 2019, the 2019 R2R Agreement was supported by the London Region FBU's regional committee at its meeting on Tuesday 7 May 2019. The 2019 R2R Agreement was signed by both sides on Tuesday 18 June 2019 prior to the planned implementation on Tuesday 15 October 2019.

- 4.3. The expected reduction in standby moves will result in a reduced impact on air quality and carbon emissions in London due to an expected reduction in vehicle movements, supporting the Mayor's London Environment Strategy. This reduction will not contribute to carbon reduction targets as standby movements by individual staff are not within scope.
- 4.4. Reducing the number of officer standby movements will have a positive impact for staff that would incur costs under the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) which has been introduced. A standby duty on a day shift would incur a cost of £12.50 per shift, while a night shift standby duty would incur cost of £25.00 per shift. The reduction in officer standby movements will therefore greatly benefit all officers that currently do not have ULEZ compliant vehicles.

Strategic drivers

- 4.5. The R2R Agreement plays a key role in the delivery of the strategic aims of the London Safety Plan 2017:
- a) valuing staff and using resources wisely (page 50);
 - b) enabling staff to be the best they can be (page 50);
 - c) putting staff first (page 49);
 - d) developing a structured approach to career succession (page 50);
 - e) supporting staff progression (page 50);
 - f) operational competence and readiness – being 'match fit' (page 50);
 - g) improving Industrial and Employee relations (reduce failures to agree) (page 52);
 - h) responding in an emergency and delivering our resources more efficiently (page 38);
 - i) providing the right response (page 35); and
 - j) availability of resources (page 42).
- 4.6. Further, the R2R Agreement—in reducing standbys and vehicle movements—which will align with the Mayor's aims of reducing emissions as set out in the London Environment Strategy (page 54).
- 4.7. There is an aspiration to deliver cultural change within the LFB to positively affect behaviours. A clear designation of the new ranks will be developed to ensure decision-making is correctly associated with the relevant ranks. Empowering lower ranks in making and dealing with local decisions, removing the need for unnecessary escalation of issues, is a key aim. These changes support the London Safety Plan commitment to put people first and to support wider cultural change, through developing shared values and practices that will achieve success in the future.
- 4.8. The R2R Agreement will assist with the development and training of staff to their full potential, at the same time transforming the LFB so that it is a place where people want to work and have the opportunity to influence how they work.
- 4.9. There will be greater clarity of roles and responsibilities within the simplified structure, delivering a more effective workforce. This supports the concerns and aims within the current LSP surrounding being 'match fit', ensuring that the service delivered to the public remains professional and to the best standard.
- 4.10. It is anticipated that there will be an improvement in morale for officers because of the reduction of movements and more consistency in their day-to-day workplace. This addresses feedback received from staff surveys where staff have expressed their concerns regarding the number of standby movements required and the lack of officer consistency on watches.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Total funding of £361k to fund the delivery costs for this project have previously been put aside as part of the Organisation Reviews earmarked reserve.
- 5.2. The project also sets out additional ongoing costs for the delivery of the 2019 R2R project objectives of £1,113k and ongoing savings of £587k, for a net additional budget pressure of £525k. Funding of £177k has already been identified for this project as part of the 2019/20 Budget Report (LFC-0133 to the London Fire Commissioner), if the recommendation in report LFC-0202 to the Commissioner is agreed, additional funding of £348k will then be included as part of the budget process for future years. Based on an October 2019 implementation date, this would also result in additional spend of £222k in 2019/20 which will be reported on as part of the regular financial position reports.
- 5.3. This report also sets out estimated project and implementation costs of £797k. Of this, £375k are for operational staff costs which are contained within existing resources and £111k has been incurred in previous financial years. The remaining £311k will be incurred in 2019/20 and funded through the existing Organisational Reviews earmarked reserve, which includes funding for this project of £361k. Any unused funding will be returned to the general reserve at the end of the 2019/20 financial year.
- 5.4. The funding for the R2R project implementation is managed within the funds provided to the London Fire Commissioner, and no additional funds from the Greater London Authority are sought. The cost impacts identified in Section 2 are based on current salary levels and so are subject to future salary changes.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. 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 London Fire Commissioner to incur the expenditure set out in the recommendations to this report.
- 6.3. The report proposes to implement an agreement between the London Fire Commissioner and the Fire Brigades Union delivering a new operational staffing structure. The statutory basis for this is provided by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, under which the Commissioner must secure the provision of personnel and may take any action they consider appropriate to do this.
- 6.4. In taking the decisions requested, the Deputy Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty - namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Deputy Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

Appendices and supporting papers:

1. LFC-0202 – 'Role-to-Rank Agreement'

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 either be published 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

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

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 – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer

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

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service

Tom Middleton has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience for approval.

✓

Advice

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 16 September 2019.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

M. D. Allen

Date

17.9.19