

What should the new London Fire Commissioner's priorities be?

London Fire Brigade sign

Key information

Publication type: Current investigation

Publication status: Adopted

Publication date: Thursday 29 May 2025

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Introduction

The Fire Committee is holding a one-off meeting following the appointment of the new London Fire Commissioner.

Meeting aims and objectives (terms of reference)

The Committee will explore what priorities the new London Fire Commissioner (LFC) should focus on upon taking up the role.

Key issues

On 16 Jan 2025, LFC, Andy Roe KFSM, advised Mayor of London, Sir Sadiq Khan, of his intention to retire after five years in the role. Under Andy Roe's leadership, London Fire Brigade (LFB) has faced numerous challenges, including its response to the Grenfell Tower fire official inquiry, the findings from the independent culture review in 2022, and successive poor reports by His Majesty's Inspectorate. There have also been signs of

significant progress in this time:

- LFB completed all 29 recommendations made by the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report in March 2024.
- LFB exited the HMICFRS engage process in March 2024.
- The latest HMICFRS report published in November 2024 found LFB now was outstanding in one category, good in five, adequate in four and only one was rated as requires improvement.

The new Commissioner is taking office at an important moment for LFB. It is just two and half years into LFB's six-year Community Risk Management Plan (2023-2029) – the Brigade's integrated risk management plan, a national framework document which it is legally required to publish.

LFB is also facing significant budgetary challenges in coming years.

Climate change is projected to pose an increasing risk to Londoners with more wildfires and flooding. It is only three years on since LFB's busiest day since WWII when wildfires broke out across London at the peak of an extreme heat period. LFB is also managing a complex new building safety regime – rolled out in 2024.

It is also an important moment for the wider fire and rescue sector. The Government is expected to address reform of the fire and rescue service following up on a White Paper published by the last Government. A key measure is a proposed College of Fire and Rescue which the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report recommended should be introduced as soon as possible, and which the Government said it would consult on in its response to the report.

Key questions

- What are the key issues that the new London Fire Commissioner should be focused on in the short term (6-12 months) and long term (1-5 years)?
- What are the core standards that a fire service fit for the capital should have?
- How can the new Commissioner make best use of research and data to help inform LFB's approach to firefighting now and into the future?
- What innovations in approach and technology should LFB be considering now to respond to the evolving challenges in London, such as climate change and lithium-ion batteries?

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