



Zack Polanski AM
Chair of the Fire Committee

Jules Pipe CBE

Deputy Mayor, Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service

(Sent by email)

28 July 2025

Dear Jules,

Priorities for the new London Fire Commissioner (LFC)

We were pleased to welcome you and the new London Fire Commissioner (LFC), to the London Assembly Fire Committee's meeting on 1 July – Jonathan Smith's first day in post. This Committee, in its various guises, has had many opportunities to question Jonathan Smith in his capacity as Assistant Commissioner and then Deputy Assistant Commissioner before this appointment. We now look forward to seeing what he will bring to the role as the Brigade continues to navigate the many complex challenges that firefighting in London demands.

With a new LFC in post, we have taken this opportunity to set out where we want LFB to make progress in the coming years, and have written to the new Commissioner on this. As Deputy Mayor, you will naturally also want to hold LFB to account on these measures, and we anticipate that these issues will form a major part of our discussions in the months and years ahead.

As Deputy Mayor, we expect you to play an active and visible role in supporting and challenging the LFC to deliver sustained progress across all areas of performance. With the appointment of a new Commissioner, it is timely to get clarity on how you will work with the new LFC to deliver and sustain the improvements demanded of the Brigade. Accordingly, we request a reply from you in good time ahead of the next Fire Plenary detailing:

- How you will oversee delivery against the strategic priorities outlined in the Committee's letter to the LFC, including ensuring regular, transparent performance monitoring, and taking corrective action where necessary.
- How you will assess and report on LFB's preparedness for the next HMICFRS inspection round, and what actions you will take to ensure the Brigade is on track to improve its

inspection grades—especially in those areas previously rated as ‘adequate’ or ‘requires improvement’.

- How you will ensure that LFB has the financial support it needs to meet its statutory obligations, become the leading Brigade nationally, and respond to emerging risks. This includes advocating for sufficient funding in future GLA budgets, ensuring resources are aligned with priority areas such as workforce development, fire safety, and operational capability, and driving value for money across the organisation.

We will be looking for clear evidence as LFB’s draft budget is submitted to the Assembly that it can enable the improvements necessary for LFB to perform at the highest standard ahead of its next HMICFRS inspection.

Please send your response by email to the Committee’s Clerk, Diane Richards (Diane.Richards@london.gov.uk).

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zack Polanski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Zack Polanski AM
Chair of the Fire Committee