



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Report Title:	
Resourcing to deliver stakeholder engagement and public affairs	
Report to:	Date:
Finance and Investment Board Commissioner's Board London Fire Commissioner	23 rd June 2022 6 th July 2022
Report author:	Name: Lorraine Homer Job Title: Director of Communication
Report classification:	
For Decision	
The subject matter for this report deals with the following LFB strategic priorities:	
The best people and the best place to work: ensuring we are supporting our critical engagement with key stakeholders with appropriately skilled professionals Outward facing: engagement with key stakeholders is essential to increase their understanding of our work and our progress on our strategic priorities, to engage in debate and discussion around key policies, and to further improve the accountability and transparency of LFB	
Report number – LFC-0723	
For Publication	
PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DECISION-MAKER	

I agree the recommended decision below.



Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner

Date **This decision was signed
remotely on 25 July 2022**

Executive Summary

A small amount of increased resource is required to enable the Public Affairs and Community Engagement teams to better support London Fire Brigade's engagement with key stakeholders and communities. This includes national government, City Hall, regional and local authorities and the National Fire Chiefs Council, and local communities across London, in particular seldom heard or harder to reach communities. This will improve stakeholders' awareness and understanding of our strategic priorities and how we are delivering them, improve our response to scrutiny, improve our accountability and transparency, and strengthen our ability to influence policy, debate and discussion at all levels. It will also support the delivery of key engagement events during the consultation on Your London Fire Brigade and afterwards.

This paper requests a draw down on LFB Budget Flexibility Reserves to create a new Public Affairs Manager position at FRS Grade F and to regrade an existing role from FRS C to FRS D, to better reflect the requirements of the role, and to cover a temporary administrative position at FRS C for the rest of this calendar year which will support all the teams within Stakeholder Engagement and Community Engagement. Funding is also requested for non-staff costs including Community Engagement activities and training.

Recommended decision

That the London Fire Commissioner approves an increase in the Communications Directorate's budget for 2022/23 of £118,000 to be funded by a draw from the Budget Flexibility Reserve in 2022/23.

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Public Affairs team in the Communications Directorate comprises one Manager role at FRS F, one Senior Officer role at FRS E, and one Officer role at FRS C. This team of three is overseen by the Head of Stakeholder and Community Engagement, a substantive role that also encompasses oversight of the Community Engagement team and the Museum team. Slightly adjusted arrangements are currently in place while the Head of this function is on maternity leave, returning in August.
- 1.2 Demand on the three-strong Public Affairs team is significant and has grown substantially in the past nine months. This includes:

- Engaging and building relationships with GLA scrutiny committees, including but not limited to the Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee (FREPEPC), and ensuring LFB provides timely, relevant, accurate and helpful information to explain the work of the Brigade and how it is delivering services that meet the needs of London's communities;
- Ensuring the Brigade provides timely, relevant and accurate responses to Mayor's Questions every month, which together with scrutiny committees are a key part of the way LFB is held accountable by the Mayor and the GLA on behalf of Londoners;
- Regular engagement with multiple stakeholders as we consult on, finalise and then start to deliver on *Your London Fire Brigade*, our draft Community Risk Management Plan;
- Support, advice and involvement in policy and position development around the Government's White Paper on Fire Reform, the implementation of the Fire Safety Act, the forthcoming Building Safety Regulator and the consultation on Emergency Evacuation Information Sharing;
- Bringing our stakeholder engagement out into fire stations with a greater emphasis on engaging with MPs, Assembly Members, local councillors, interest groups and others in the community, showing them how we work;
- Working across the whole of the Brigade to gather information to support all of this engagement, and working across the Communication Directorate to ensure our communication activity is fully joined up and co-ordinated so our messages are consistent, cohesive and geared towards outcomes that make Londoner better informed and ultimately safer.

1.3 The team is under-resourced to effectively deliver on this activity, all of which is critical to ensure the Brigade remains properly scrutinised, accountable, open and transparent. It has been particularly difficult to recruit into the Officer role from what is an extremely competitive public affairs job market.

1.4 It is important to note that responsibility for relationships and briefing to FREPEPC transferred to the Public Affairs team in January without any additional resources. The team have to this point absorbed the extra work but this is not sustainable in the long-term.

1.5 A small non-staff budget allocation will enable the Stakeholder and Communication Directorate to both undertake training and directly deliver engagement activities which will help LFB better reach its key audiences. Due to changes in leadership within the Communication Directorate in the last financial year, the Directorate was not in a position to submit a bid for funding in the latest budget round but the lack of a non-staff budget to develop staff and deliver activities is a significant hindrance to the Directorate's overall delivery.

2 Objectives and Expected Outcomes

2.1 Creating a second Manager role within the Public Affairs team will increase the ability of the team to meet current demand and to be more proactive, and improve the resilience within the team at a senior level.

- 2.2 Regrading the Officer post will better reflect the actual responsibilities of the role to provide a more competitive opportunity in the market.
- 2.3 Temporary administrative support will help the team members manage their workloads more effectively by freeing them up to concentrate on the engagement and communication aspects of their roles rather than navigating the considerable administrative requirements of their work during the second half of the financial year, enabling skills to be used where they are of most value and effect.
- 2.4 A non-staff budget will help the Directorate to receive or deliver:
- Chartered-level training for all Directorate staff in understanding audiences and in measurement and evaluation of outcomes;
 - an exercise to test and train all Directorate staff in delivering the newly-developed major incident communication plan, which has been expanded to ensure stakeholder and community audiences are effectively engaged during such incidents;
 - engagement activities directly with identified vulnerable, seldom-heard or hard to reach communities to increase understanding of our service catalogues and how we can work with them;
 - developing and deliver training and awareness for LFB staff on community engagement, including on the Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy;
 - supporting the roll out of the Community Forums;
 - evaluating the Community Engagement pilot which ran in 2021/22 to feed into the delivery of Your London Fire Brigade which has community engagement as one of its six key tenets and which will require the Brigade to embed community engagement as a discipline across everything it does over the next seven years.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The LFC 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 The F & D roles will be advertised internally first and will be advertised externally if a suitable internal candidate is not found. The temporary C role will be recruited via Reed as an internal applicant has not been identified for a secondment or other arrangement. The London Fire Commissioner is an Equal Opportunities Employer and applications will be welcomed from all suitably qualified individuals, irrespective of age, disability, gender, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or other personal circumstances. Guidance is in place to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and consistently at every stage of the recruitment process, including the consideration of reasonable adjustments for people who have a disability.
- 3.8 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been produced as the recruitment process will follow LFB's established procedures which take into account equality, inclusion and diversity as outlined above.

4. Other Considerations

Workforce comments

- 4.1 This decision increases LFB's establishment by one post and increases the seniority of an existing post. Consultation with representative bodies was not undertaken ahead of this decision as the impacts on the workforce are positive.

Sustainability comments

- 4.2 There are no sustainability impacts arising from this report.

Procurement comments

- 4.3 There are no procurement impacts arising from this decision. If external recruitment is undertaken it will be via LFB's Recruitment team.

5. Financial comments

This report recommends the creation of an FRS F post and an upgrade of an existing post from FRSC to FRS D from 1 August 2022, and an interim and temporary FRS C post for six months to be recruited as soon as practicable. This will be at a revenue cost of £73,000 in the 2022/23 financial year. It also recommends an increase to the non-staff budget of £45,000 revenue cost. The report recommends these costs are funded by a draw from the Budget Flexibility Reserve in 2022/23.

The balance of the Budget Flexibility Reserve was £30,532k as at the end of the 2021/22 Financial Year.

The staff costs will require an approved investment proposal to be included in the 2023/24 budget process for an ongoing revenue cost of £79,400.

6. Legal comments

6.1 Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the LFC 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 LFC specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.

6.2 The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 which states that the Commissioner "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...". Section 112 further states that, "An officer appointed... shall hold office on such reasonable terms and conditions, including conditions as to remuneration, as the authority appointing him think fit."

6.3 Under the Commissioner's Scheme of Governance a Director may "agree the Directorate plan" and may also, "determine matters that relate to the internal management of the directorate".

6.4 Under the Commissioner's Scheme of Governance the Commissioner may undertake any action whether that action is also delegated or not. This includes authorising to transfer of monies from the Budget Flexibility Reserve.

6.5 The proposals in this report therefore fall within the powers of the Commissioner to determine.

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 – NO

<p>ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:</p> <p>Drafting officer Lorraine Homer has drafted this report and confirms the following:</p> <p>Assistant Director/Head of Service Lorraine Homer has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to Board for consideration.</p> <p>Advice The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal; Thomas Davies, Legal Advisor, on behalf of General Counsel (Head of Law and Monitoring Officer) [Name] Financial Advisor, on behalf of the Chief Finance Officer</p>	<p>Drafting officer to confirm the following (ü)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
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