

Revisions to the Thematic Board Structure

Report to:

Date:

Performance, Risk and Assurance Board10 December 2024
Commissioner's Board 11 December 2024
London Fire Commissioner

Report by:

Andrew Beesley, Head of Governance

Report classification:

For decision

For publication

Values met

Service
Learning

I agree the recommended decision below.



Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner

**This decision was remotely
Date signed on 3 January 2025**

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

Since 2021 the LFC has operated a thematic board structure which ensures that the Brigade's business and the Commissioner's decisions are appropriately, effectively, and efficiently scrutinised, assured and executed. This report proposes revisions to that structure which will strengthen that outcome, taking account of findings from a number of reports regarding the effectiveness of the LFC's boards and their meetings.

It is proposed to decommission the Performance, Risk and Assurance Board (PRAB) and establish separate Portfolio and Risk & Assurance Boards. Responsibility for overseeing the delivery of targeted results by monitoring performance against corporate priorities will transfer from PRAB to the Service Delivery Board. The revised structure will take effect from January 2025 with the final meeting of the Performance, Risk and Assurance Board taking place in December 2024.

Proposed decision – the London Fire Commissioner

1. Agrees the revisions to the thematic board structure with effect from January 2025 and delegates authority to General Counsel to oversee its implementation.
2. Delegates authority to General Counsel to make minor revisions to thematic board terms of reference in consultation with Chairs.
2. Notes planned work to introduce a Local Code of Governance and to review and rationalise the suite of sub-boards which report into the thematic boards.

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 The London Fire Commissioner operates a governance framework which has been subject to regular review since 2018. In 2021, a thematic board structure was introduced which ensured the Brigade's business and the Commissioner's decisions were appropriately, effectively, and efficiently scrutinised, assured and executed.
- 1.2 More recently, findings and conclusions drawn from a variety of sources, including annual board effectiveness surveys, the LFC's Annual Governance Statement and Internal Audit's annual review report, identified opportunities to refine and improve further the effectiveness of the LFC's board arrangements and the reporting framework.

Revised board arrangements within a changing context

- 1.3 The London Fire Brigade has been engaged in a significant programme of transformation,

articulated initially through a Transformation Delivery Plan (2020) and more latterly through the Community Risk Management Plan, 'Your London Fire Brigade' (2023-29). The LFC's governance framework has been subject to regular review during this period with various structural reforms introduced to facilitate delivery and assurance of that transformation, notably a portfolio management function and a business assurance framework model.

- 1.4** In 2021, a thematic board structure was introduced which replaced the directorate (function-based) board model that had been in place since 2018. The transition to a thematic cross-cutting board structure comprising monthly meetings of the Investment and Finance Board, the Performance, Risk and Assurance Board, and People and Operational Delivery Boards (later replaced by the Service Delivery Board) encompassed a greater focus on strategy, risk, assurance and performance and closer alignment to the Commissioner's vision for the London Fire Brigade. Independent lines of assurance including the LFC's Audit Committee and MOPAC (responsible for the LFC's internal audit function) supported the re-organisation.
- 1.5** In a board effectiveness survey that was issued to members of each of the thematic boards, the members of the Performance, Risk and Assurance Board identified measures to improve the effectiveness of the Board and its meetings. Firstly, board members pointed to the efficiency of meetings with limited time available to debate important matters owing to heavy agenda with multiple lengthy reports and a need to better distribute the focus between performance, risk and assurance and portfolio elements. Secondly, and an issue identified similarly in other thematic board effectiveness surveys, was the increasing demand (through preparation and attendance at board meetings) being placed upon a small cadre of senior leaders within LFB. The demand extends beyond the suite of thematic boards and to the suite of sub-boards, working groups and other various governance mechanisms that exist within LFB.
- 1.6** The relevance of the results from PRAB's annual effectiveness survey is significant and timely in the context of the release of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report and the gathering pace of LFB's transformation through its portfolio. As LFB progresses between transition states of the CRMP delivery plan and moves to a position of continuous improvement, there is increased importance on the risk and assurance function and greater reliance on the checks and balances which PRAB currently holds responsibility for as a line of defence in the business assurance framework.
- 1.7** To more effectively manage the demand currently placed upon PRAB its dissolution is proposed with replacements in the form of dedicated Portfolio and Risk and Assurance Boards which will meet on a quarterly basis (PRAB currently meets monthly). PRAB's performance responsibilities (essentially the completion of actions/activities distributed to departments) will transfer to Service Delivery Board, a move towards reflecting a business as usual service delivery model. The proposed structural changes will, if approved, result in new and revised terms of reference for existing and new thematic boards (attached at Appendix 1). The memberships for the proposed thematic boards will be refined with a balance between subject matter experts who can provide insight and analysis and independent colleagues who offer challenge and counter-argument. Overall, the revisions to the structure results in a reduction in membership numbers across the thematic boards.
- 1.8** Work will also commence in the coming months to review and rationalise the suite of sub-boards and working groups that exist across the organisation (reducing the demand on the senior leadership cohort) and their relationship and reporting lines into the thematic boards; this is due for completion by April 2025. Its work will be aided by the introduction of a 'Code of Governance' which will bring together an underlying set of values, governance principles, legislative requirements and business management processes that enable the LFC to achieve its objectives.

It will explain what governance is, why it is important and how staff are informed about the Code and the details of the LFC's governance arrangements (including board arrangements, memberships and associated meeting procedures and the process to be followed for the establishment of new boards, sub-boards or working groups at a corporate level).

- 1.9 Finally, a key driver for board effectiveness is the reliability of information presented for the scrutiny of planned decision-making and assurance. Whilst there has been a marked improvement in recent years in the drafting of reports, there remains a tendency to view the thematic boards as a consultation forum (further reinforcing the introduction of a 'Code of Governance' as referenced in the previous paragraph). Accountability rests with Heads of Service in ensuring reports are clear in terms of expectation and ask, contain the right level of content whilst providing succinct and clear analysis in terms of risk, benefits and link to organisational priorities. That responsibility will be strengthened through measures in the coming months to ensure compliance with the LFC's report clearance process.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The proposed revisions to the thematic board structure strengthen the machinery that ensures the Brigade's business and the Commissioner's decisions are appropriately, effectively, and efficiently scrutinised, assured and executed.
- 2.2 Additionally, the changes provided the opportunity to review meeting commitments placed upon the senior leadership cohort and build in succession planning through revisions to thematic board membership.

3 Values Comments

- 3.1 The LFC notes the Fire Standards Board requirements around adopting and embedding the Core Code of Ethics at an individual and corporate level. Following extensive engagement, the LFC has introduced Brigade values which build on and do not detract from the Code of Ethics.
- 3.2 Learning: the proposals have in part been shaped by feedback from Brigade officers and findings from internal and external sources of assurance.
- 3.3 Service: the revised board structure strengthens the tier of governance which is designed for scrutiny and challenge of planned decision-making and assurance of the service to Londoners.

4 Equality Comments

- 4.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

4.7 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.

4.8 The proposals are considered neutral in terms of any impact upon equality outcomes.

Workforce comments

4.9 There are no industrial relations impacts arising from the report. The report does not seek to increase the demand placed upon the workforce, particularly for the senior leadership cohort. Indeed, the report's proposals seek to ensure that the governance arrangements are balanced and proportionate.

Sustainability comments

4.10 There are none.

Procurement comments

4.11 There are none

Communications comments

4.12 If approved, the revisions will be communicated to the organisation, with specific communications to those officers directly impacted by the changes, either as board members or reportees to those boards.

5 Financial comments

5.1 The Chief Finance Officer has reviewed this report and has no comments.

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, or consultation with, either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (the "Deputy Mayor"). The Governance arrangements proposed do not fall within the Mayoral Directions.

6.3 Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that the London Fire Commissioner ('Commissioner') is the fire and rescue authority for Greater London. Section 327A (5) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 requires the Commissioner to secure that the London Fire and Rescue Service is efficient and effective.

6.4 The internal governance arrangements enable functions to be discharged and decisions to be taken in a lawful, transparent, consistent and timely manner, and facilitates efficiency and effectiveness in the organisation.

6.5 The proposals set out in this report are within the Commissioner's general powers.

List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
1	Thematic Board Terms of Reference	Open

Part two confidentiality

Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part Two form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a Part Two form: No



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

PORTFOLIO BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. PURPOSE

Portfolio Board provides oversight of the transformation portfolio and the LFC's investment in change, monitoring progress of the programme boards in delivering activity encompassed within the Community Risk Management Plan. It holds responsibility for resolving issues that may compromise portfolio delivery and benefits realisation.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The membership is comprised of individuals who have the skills, knowledge or interests relating to the board's responsibilities. Board members are expected to:

- Prepare for the meeting by reading the agenda papers
- Arrive on time
- Actively participate in the meeting, providing thoughtful input and challenge to board deliberations

If unavailable, provide apologies to the Governance Manager and arrange for a substitute to attend (at a rank or grade commensurate with the member concerned or a direct reportee with sufficient insight to contribute to board business). It is the board member's responsibility to provide the substitute with the meeting papers and a brief on the business for that meeting.

Board membership is comprised of the following:

AD Strategic Planning (Chair)
AD Finance Transformation
AD Procurement and Commercial
Programme Senior Responsible Officers
Professional Head of Portfolio
Portfolio Manager
Business Architect
Business Change Manager, Portfolio

Other staff will be invited to attend board meetings as appropriate to the agenda, whether as a report presenter or as a subject matter expert.

3. MEETINGS

Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis. It will be for the Chair to determine requests for additional meetings. In the absence of the Chair the Board will appoint one of its cohort to chair the meeting.

Action lists will be issued no later than 48 hours after the meeting. Draft minutes will be circulated within 5 working days of the meeting.

An electronic agenda will be available to Board members via MS Teams at least 5 clear working days in advance of a meeting.

4. REPORTING LINES

Minutes from meetings of Portfolio Board will be reported to the next meeting of Commissioner Board.

5. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- To monitor and scrutinise delivery of the portfolio against the portfolio summary dashboard
- To receive updates from monthly Portfolio Review meetings, taking corrective action where required to ensure continued alignment of the portfolio to strategic priorities and organisational objectives through application of the Change Control procedure.
- To monitor and manage high level interdependencies (including portfolio-level risk), reviewing the availability of required capacity and capability across departments
- To monitor actual and forecast expenditure against programme budgets, recommending corrective action where necessary to Programme SROs as budget holders.
- To provide a quarterly portfolio overview report to Commissioner's Board

6. PROGRAMME SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNERS (SROs) RESPONSIBILITIES (from Cabinet Office best practice):

- Representation: Act as the primary advocate for their programme, ensuring its interests and needs are effectively communicated to the board.
- Alignment: SROs ensure that their programme aligns with the overall strategic objectives of the portfolio and the organisation.
- Decision-Making: Participate in high-level decision-making processes, providing insights and making recommendations based on their programme's status and needs.
- Performance Reporting: SROs report on the progress, risks, and issues of their programme, ensuring the board is kept informed about key developments.
- Resource Allocation: Advocate for the necessary resources and support required for their programme, ensuring it has what it needs to succeed.
- Risk Management: SROs highlight and manage risks associated with their programme, proposing mitigation strategies to the board.

7. OTHER MATTERS

The board shall be supported administratively by a Governance Manager, whose duties in this respect will include:

- Agreement of agenda with the Chair
- Collation and distribution of papers no less than 5 working days in advance of the meeting. Late items can only be added with the prior agreement of the Chair.

- Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for the servicing of the board including producing the minutes of the meeting and taking forward matters arising and issues to be carried forward
- Advising the board on pertinent governance-related issues



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

RISK AND ASSURANCE BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. PURPOSE

It is the responsibility of the Risk and Assurance Board to ensure the Brigade maintains effective risk, assurance and business continuity management frameworks. The Board will seek evidence and provide advice and assurance to the LFC that the appropriate levels of internal control are in place across the Brigade.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The membership is comprised of individuals who have the skills, knowledge or interests relating to the board's responsibilities. Board members are expected to:

- Prepare for the meeting by reading the agenda papers
- Arrive on time
- Actively participate in the meeting, providing thoughtful input and challenge to board deliberations
- If unavailable, provide apologies to the Governance Manager and arrange for a substitute to attend (at a rank or grade commensurate with the member concerned or a direct reportee with sufficient insight to contribute to board business). It is the board member's responsibility to provide the substitute with the meeting papers and a brief on the business for that meeting.

Board membership is comprised of the following individuals:

Director for Transformation (Chair)
Director for Corporate Services (Vice-Chair)
Director for Communications & Engagement
Director for People
Deputy Commissioner for Preparedness and Response
Deputy Commissioner for Prevention, Protection and Operational Policy
AC Prevention & Protection
AC Fire Stations
AD Strategic Planning
Professional Head of Business Resilience
Independent Operational Assurance Advisor
Head of Risk
Head of Governance
Head of Business Assurance
HMICFRS and NFCC Liaison Manager

Other staff will be invited to attend board meetings as appropriate to the agenda, whether as a report presenter or as a subject matter expert.

3. MEETINGS

Meetings will be held quarterly. It will be for the Chair to determine requests for additional meetings. In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, the Board will appoint one of its cohort to chair the meeting.

Action lists will be issued no later than 48 hours after the meeting. Draft minutes will be circulated within 5 working days of the meeting.

An electronic agenda will be available to Board members via MS Teams 5 working days in advance of a meeting.

4. REPORTING LINES

Minutes from meetings of the Risk and Assurance Board will be reported to the next meeting of Commissioner Board.

5. REMIT

The remit of the board is to:-

- Undertake a quarterly review of the LFC's red and high amber risks, scrutinising proposals to amend risk ratings and controls
- Undertake periodic horizon scanning for future challenges which may present risks to the operation of the Brigade
- Undertake an annual review of LFC's risk appetite statement
- Scrutinise and approve the LFC's Internal Audit Annual Plan
- Consider and authorise quarterly planned Internal Audit activity and scrutinise results of Internal Audit risk and assurance and advisory reviews
- Undertake deep dives of those departmental assurance frameworks and internal audits which receive a limited or lower assurance rating
- Scrutinise and recommend for approval the LFC's Annual Statement of Assurance
- Review the Brigade's response to, and recovery from, any incident that caused significant disruption or potential disruption to the delivery of service, identifying lessons learnt which could mitigate further impact of occurrence.
- Assess the adequacy of management responses, including scrutiny of evidence to support proposed completion of actions and recommendations, to external bodies such as HMICFRS and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry
- Undertake an annual review of the LFC's Assessment of Risk
- Consider and discuss different themes for scrutiny, challenge and support;
- Ensure timely reports are made to Commissioner Board, including recommendations and remedial action taken or proposed with timeframes;

6. OTHER MATTERS

The board shall be supported administratively by a Governance Manager, whose duties in this respect will include:

- Agreement of agenda with the Chair
- Collation and distribution of papers no less than 5 working days in advance of the meeting. Late items can only be added with the prior agreement of the Chair.

- Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for the servicing of the board including producing the minutes of the meeting and taking forward matters arising and issues to be carried forward
- Advising the board on pertinent governance-related issues



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

SERVICE DELIVERY BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. PURPOSE

The Service Delivery Board will provide assurance regarding the safety and quality of prevention, protection, response, preparedness, engagement and recovery services which are delivered by LFB and is responsible for overseeing the delivery of targeted results by monitoring performance against corporate priorities, ensuring corrective actions are taken when necessary and within agreed timelines.

The board will achieve this through scrutiny, challenge and decision making to support the changes required to deliver a safer and better fire and rescue service for London.

The board will consider all matters relating to staff and workforce planning. It will consider the extent to which our interventions enhance our working environment. This will have a particular focus on how we support and value all staff and how we engage talent and nurture the leadership capability of individuals and teams.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The membership is comprised of individuals who have the skills, knowledge or interests relating to the board's responsibilities. Board members are expected to:

- Prepare for the meeting by reading the agenda papers
- Arrive on time
- Actively participate in the meeting, providing thoughtful input and challenge to board deliberations
- If unavailable, provide apologies to the Governance Manager and arrange for a substitute to attend, remembering to provide the substitute with the meeting papers and a brief on the business for that meeting.

Board membership is comprised of the following individuals:

Deputy Commissioner, Prevention, Protection & Ops Policy

Deputy Commissioner, Preparedness & Response

Director for Corporate Services

Director for People

Director for Transformation

Director for Communications and Engagement

AC Fire Stations

AC Operational Resilience and Control

AC Learning and Development

AC Operational Policy and Assurance
AC Prevention & Protection
Assistant Director, Health and Safety
Assistant Director, Property & TSS
Chief Information Officer
Assistant Director Strategic Planning
Assistant Director Procurement & Commercial
Head of Business Resilience

The Deputy Commissioner for Preparedness and Response and the Deputy Commissioner for Prevention, Protection and Policy will chair the meeting as required. If a board member is unable to attend a meeting, a deputy will be required. Other staff will be invited to attend board meetings as appropriate to the agenda.

3. MEETINGS

Meetings will be held on a monthly basis. It will be for the Chair to determine requests for additional meetings. In the absence of the Chair, the Board will appoint one of its cohort to chair the meeting.

Decisions / action lists will be issued no later than 48 hours after the meeting. Draft minutes will be circulated within 5 working days of the meeting.

An electronic agenda will be available to Board members via MS Teams at least 5 clear working days in advance of a meeting.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

To provide oversight, scrutiny, challenge and ensure continuous improvement in matters pertaining to Prevention, Protection and Response, and Preparedness, Engagement and Recovery, and wider workforce and organisational development activities.

To receive regular performance reports, scrutinising progress against the organisation's strategic priorities (undertaking deep dives where necessary), including details of corrective action undertaken to mitigate risk and provide the Board with the required level of assurance.

To consider controls and actions for mitigating operational and workforce-related risks and provide assurance to LFC that such controls are being adequately managed.

Receive reports of decisions, progress and expected outcomes from the Chairs of operational and people related sub-boards to scrutinise progress and consider future operational delivery impact (See Appendix)

To scrutinise significant amendment to or the creation of new People-related policies and strategies, ensuring ensure that they enhance LFBs workforce culture in advance of approval by the LFC.

To consider and recommend changes in the terms and conditions of employment of LFB employees.

To monitor the effectiveness of LFB's staff engagement plans, including feedback and action taken in response to staff surveys.

Any other matters that the Chair wishes to decide that falls within the remit of the board, or any matter that officers, with the agreement of the Chair, seek to refer to the board.

5. REPORTING LINES

Minutes from meetings and a verbal update from the Chair will be reported to the next meeting of Commissioner's Board.

6. OTHER MATTERS

The board shall be supported administratively by a Governance Manager whose duties in this respect will include:

- Agreement of agenda with the Chair
- Collation and distribution of papers no less than 5 working days in advance of the meeting. Late items can only be added with the prior agreement of the Chair.
- Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for the servicing of the board including producing the minutes of the meeting and taking forward matters arising and issues to be carried forward
- Advising the board on pertinent governance-related issues

APPENDIX

The following sub-groups report into Service Delivery Board

- Operational Professionalism Board
- Establishment Board
- Mobilising Crewing and Resources Governance Board
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing Board