

Report title

Agenda item

Response to the Report "The Future of the London Ambulance Service – A Strategic Review"**8**

Meeting

Date

Authority

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Report by

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Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning

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Summary

During 2011 the GLA Health and Public Services Committee undertook a review of the London Ambulance Service which culminated in the publication of a report in December 2011. The report contained six recommendations of which three have direct implications for this Authority. The Chair of the Health and Public Services Committee, Councillor Victoria Borwick AM, wrote to the Chairman on 19 December 2011, seeking an Authority response to the conclusions and recommendations contained within the report.

This report expands on the issues raised in the December 2011 report and recommends that the Chairman of LFEPa responds to the Chair of the Health and Public Services Committee in accordance with paragraphs 5 to 16 of this report.

Recommendation(s)

1. That the responses within this report be used by the Chairman of LFEPa as a response to the Chair of the Health and Public Services Committee.
2. That the Commissioner should be instructed to establish a project to explore the wider recommendations contained within the report and should bring a further paper with recommendations to the Authority later in the year.

Introduction/Background

3. In March 2011 the GLA Health and Public Services Committee ("the Committee") agreed the following terms of reference for a review of the London Ambulance Service:-
 - a. To examine the operational, financial and organisational challenges facing the London Ambulance Service and consider how these can be met;

- b. To consider what role the Mayor of London should have in relation to the governance, commissioning and delivery of the London Ambulance Service.

4. The Director of Operational Resilience and Training, Gary Dobson, gave evidence to the Committee which published its report in December 2011. The report contains six key recommendations which are repeated in Appendix 1. Recommendations 4,5 and 6 have specific reference and relevance to the London Fire Brigade and it is to these recommendations that the Chair of the Committee has specifically asked the Authority to respond to. These recommendations and draft responses are set out below.

Recommendation 4

5. "The Mayor should commission a review of shared facilities and joint working between the London Ambulance Service and the London Fire Brigade. The review should aim to generate efficiencies by making specific proposals for shared stations and control centres. The review should begin its work as soon as possible in the new Mayoral term, commencing in May 2012."

Proposed response

6. This Authority welcomes this recommendation. The Committee acknowledged that there was some progress in this area with the sharing of facilities at Barnet, Millwall and Acton fire stations. This Authority believes that significant savings could be made through further sharing of facilities. Using the figures from the report, the LAS has 70 stations and the LFB has 113. The value of these estates is estimated at £80m and £283m respectively. It is accepted that not all sites will provide the necessary facilities for both services but into the future we need to explore new ways of working, utilising new technologies and risk management to plan where emergency resources are needed by time of day. The LAS already do this to a large extent with resources placed at locations other than ambulance stations according to risk profile. However, if it were possible to reduce the estate requirements by even a small amount, it could produce significant capital receipts that could be invested in improving services.
7. While LFEPA would support and drive a review of this nature we believe that it is right that the Mayor should commission such a review and that in doing so he should seek the support of the Board of the London Ambulance Service and the Department of Health, to ensure that they are committed to implementing the outcomes of any such review where it can be demonstrated that it would lead to an improvement in services and a reduction in cost.

Recommendation 5

8. "The London Ambulance Service should set out in its next Annual Report plans to deliver efficiencies through coordinated working with other public services. This should cover such areas as shared finance and clinical audit functions with other ambulance services, and shared procurement opportunities (such as fuel, facilities management and back-office functions) with other emergency services in London."

Proposed response

9. The Authority welcomes this recommendation and has for many years now has been pressing for greater use of shared services, in particularly across the GLA Group. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the LAS the sharing of a whole range of services. There is a will within LFEPA to drive forward savings from such joint working and if such plans were to be set out within the LAS annual report then it would demonstrate that the LAS Board were as committed to such initiatives.

Recommendation 6

10. "The London Ambulance Service should consider specifying the Greater London Authority, Transport for London, Metropolitan Police Service and London Fire Brigade as partnership organisations in the

constitution it adopts upon becoming a Foundation Trust, and appoint a representative of each organisation to the LAS Council of Governors. We ask the LAS to report back to the Committee on how it will take forward this recommendation."

11. "Following this, when the LAS becomes a Foundation Trust the Mayor should ask the GLA representative on the LAS Council of Governors (which could mean an Assembly Member) to apply to the Council to be appointed a non-executive director of the LAS, in order to begin the detailed work to bring the organisations more closely together."

Proposed response

12. The Authority welcomes this recommendation and would be keen to appoint a representative to the LAS Council of Governors when it becomes a foundation trust and agree that a GLA representative should also be appointed.

Further comments

13. The Mayor, in his capacity as Chairman of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPC) and through his monitoring of LFEPA, has oversight and can co-ordinate the activities of the police and fire services within the capital. It would, in our opinion, be logical to bring the emergency response activities of the London Ambulance Service within scope of the Mayor's activities
14. The London Fire Brigade and the London Ambulance Service have much in common and frequently work together when they attend the same incidents. They both have a highly skilled professional workforce and the Committee heard how they already train each other in certain aspects of their work. In many countries both services work within a single organisation and, while complete integration in this way may not be a suitable model for London, we believe that all opportunities for closer working and integration where appropriate should be explored and would bring extensive benefits to London.
15. We believe that the bringing together of the services would allow early delivery of savings from, for example, joint procurement, facilities management and the full range of back office functions. Having a single property strategy could bring significant savings in the longer term as the estate could be rationalised as envisaged within the report. This strategy could include headquarters and training facilities which could potentially be amalgamated or shared.
16. As noted within the report, the London Fire Brigade has a new Operations Centre in Merton from which its control and mobilising function operates. The London Ambulance Service currently operates from centres in Waterloo and Bow. The LAS mobilising function is very different from that of the LFB therefore significant work would need to be undertaken to see how these two operations could be integrated to bring forward efficiencies. In addition none of the existing sites are likely to have the capacity to manage a combined service however some strategic planning could enable a joint service to operate out of two or more sites bringing additional resilience and capacity to this function.

Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services comments

17. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services has reviewed this report and has no comments.

Director of Finance and Contractual Services comments

18. The Director of Finance and Contractual Services has reviewed this report and has no comments.

Environmental Implications

19. There are no direct environmental implications from this report however, if the proposals are acted upon and come to fruition then there could be significant environmental improvements through a reduction in premises and their consequential energy use.

Equalities Implications

20. There are no equalities implications as a result of the recommendations contained within this report.

List of Appendices to this report:

1. Recommendations from "The future of the London Ambulance Service December 2011"

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985	
List of background documents	
1. London Assembly Health and Public Services Committee report ' <i>The future of the London Ambulance Service</i> ' December 2011.	
2. Letter from the Chair, London Assembly Health and Public Services Committee, 19 December 2011.	
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Appendix 1 – Recommendations in *The future of the London Ambulance Service*

Recommendation 1

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime should commission a review of the processes used by the London Ambulance Service and the Metropolitan Police Service, for making and handling police requests for ambulance support. The review should aim to recommend steps that would help reduce the number of incidents attended by the LAS as a result of police requests, without having a detrimental effect on patient outcomes. The British Transport Police and City of London Police should also be invited to participate in the review; other partner organisations such as the London Fire Brigade should also be consulted.

Recommendations should focus on shared resources or improvements to working practices. The review should begin its work as soon as possible in the new Mayoral term, commencing in May 2012, and aim to complete its work within three months.

Recommendation 2

As Chair of Transport for London, the Mayor should invite the London Ambulance Service to participate in the project board developing proposals for the integration of door-to-door services. Thereafter, the project board should develop a comprehensive plan to establish an integrated door-to-door service that supports people with mobility problems to get around the city and access health services. The Mayor should confirm the invitation to the LAS in his response to the Committee by the end of February 2012.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor should invite the London Ambulance Service to join the London Health Improvement Board, in order to explore opportunities for joint working on public education and the prevention of ill health. The Mayor should confirm the invitation to the LAS in his response to the Committee by the end of February 2012.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should commission a review of shared facilities and joint working between the London Ambulance Service and the London Fire Brigade. The review should aim to generate efficiencies by making specific proposals for shared stations and control centres. The review should begin its work as soon as possible in the new Mayoral term, commencing in May 2012.

Recommendation 5

The London Ambulance Service should set out in its next Annual Report plans to deliver efficiencies through coordinated working with other public services. This should cover such areas as shared finance and clinical audit functions with other ambulance services, and shared procurement opportunities (such as fuel, facilities management and back-office functions) with other emergency services in London.

Recommendation 6

The London Ambulance Service should consider specifying the Greater London Authority, Transport for London, Metropolitan Police Service and London Fire Brigade as partnership organisations in the constitution it adopts upon becoming a Foundation Trust, and appoint a representative of each organisation to the LAS Council of Governors. We ask the LAS to report back to the Committee on how it will take forward this recommendation.

Following this, when the LAS becomes a Foundation Trust the Mayor should ask the GLA representative on the LAS Council of Governors (which could mean an Assembly Member) to apply to the Council to be appointed a non-executive director of the LAS, in order to begin the detailed work to bring the organisations more closely together.