LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Assessment of Risk 2025

Emerging Trends and Future Risks: Operational Horizon Scanning Workshop Series

Method

2025

Purpose and Approach

Purpose

The purpose of the workshop series is to identify and prioritise new and emerging operational risks and trends for inclusion in the Assessment of Risk for London (AoR).

Output:

- A report that summarises analysis of emerging trends and future operational risk, with priority areas identified. This report is to form Layer Four of the AoR
- A report that summarises, in the consensus view of workshop attendees, those emerging trends and future risks that have the widest gap between potential impact and current Brigade preparedness. This assessment should be used to prioritise resource allocation to any work needed to address the gaps.

Approach

The workshop series is designed to bring to draw together the Brigade's various sources of risk information including departmental horizon scanning to develop a shared understanding of future operational risk and emerging trends. Subject matter experts, policy owners and key stake holders were identified by Strategic Planning and brought together for a series of two workshops. Representatives were sought from the following departments.

- Ops Policy and Assurance
- Ops Resilience and Control
- Prevention
- Protection
- Medical intervention and IEC
- Business Continuity
- Business Intelligence
- Fire Investigation
- Central Operations
- Performance and Business Intelligence

The structure of the workshop series is informed by The Cabinet Office for Science, Futures Toolkit.

Future Toolkit

The workshop series in 2025 took place in February to feed the AoR update

Workshop One detail

Workshop one focusses on identifying emerging trends and future risks in the operational environment.

Prior to workshop 1 delegates are asked to conduct their own analysis of emerging trends and future risk identified in their own departments and areas of expertise

Strategic Planning carry out desk research on trends and risks with support from the business intelligence team for presentation at the beginning of workshop one.
Delegates are placed into multi-disciplinary syndicates of four to six.

Guest speakers present information on risk in areas of concern identified by strategic planning.

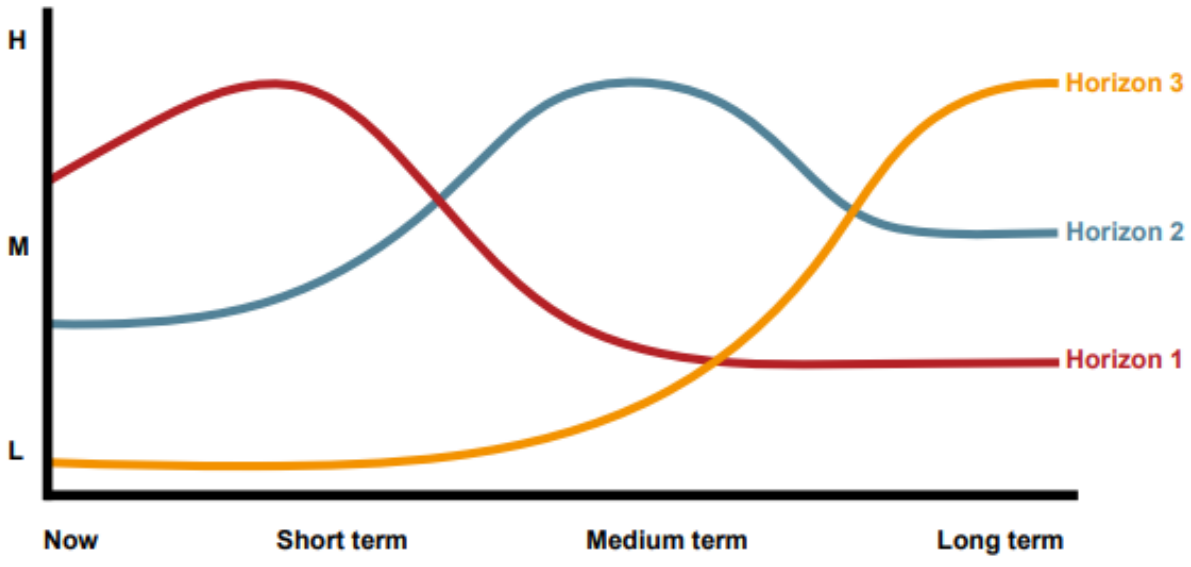
Delegates are presented with the seven NFCC contexts; Industry, Height, structures and confined spaces, Transport, Utilities and fuel, Major incidents, Geophysical hazards, Terrorist attacks with an eighth context of social and demographic change.

Syndicates are asked to discuss and record their identified risks and trends for each context using a grid to position each trend or risk against its level of concern using a Red Amber Green system.

Syndicates are also asked to identify the predominate area of concern; firefighter harm, environmental harm, public harm and operational demand and to sate which horizon the risk as viewed as falling into. This gives a measure of the immediacy of the hazard.

Three Horizons concept

Horizon 1 issues are strategically important now.
They are visible and are generally the issues that we are responding to now or concerned about right now. Ideally H1 issues will become less important over time as policy and strategy develops.
Horizon 2 issues will develop in a way that may not be apparent yet, but many of the key trends and factors – the change drivers – are already in play. The task for policy makers and strategists is to look at these issues closely, to explore the possible outcomes and to adapt policy and strategy in anticipation of future need
Horizon 3 issues are new challenges that will emerge, but the change drivers are difficult to see in the present. It is not clear how H3 factors will develop The task here is therefore to identify and track the drivers that will shape H3



The recording grid is prepopulated with concerns raised in previous years with additional space for new concerns.

Example:

Ref	2024 Finding	RAG	Harm Type	Horizon	No longer a concern?	Comment/Explanation
1.A	New processes such as automation reducing staff at industrial buildings reducing live information sources to LFB on arrival at incidents.					
1.B	Increased fires in waste recycling plants as new fuels including lithium-ion age and reach end of life.					
1.C	Concerns about impact of alternative fuels on operational incidents including the creation of contaminated water run off due to the presence of minerals and metals in the fuels.					
1.D	Erosion of trust in emergency services and their instructions leading to changed public behaviour exacerbated by cyber-attacks and AI misuse					
1.E	Geopolitical tensions affecting operations through increased incident demand and malicious threats.					
1.F	Higher operating and living costs leading to reduced maintenance across private and public property and infrastructure leading to increased demand on emergency services through equipment, plant and system failures.					
1.G	Terrorism threats and security challenges.					
1.H	Design of mega warehouses leading to large areas of fire spread and complicated internal structures within buildings hampering firefighting and rescue					
1.I	New Concern					
1.J	New Concern					
1.K	New Concern					

Once completed each syndicate rotated through a series of consensus building sessions until broad consensus had been reached amongst the whole group regarding risks, trends and levels of concern.

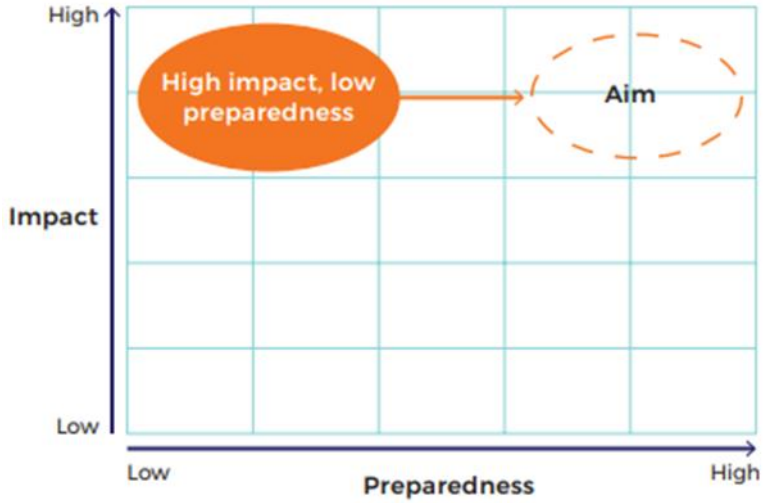
Workshop Two detail

The methodology employed to identify and assess perceived preparedness gaps within LFB was taken from the framework outlined in the Royal Academy of Engineering's report, Building Resilience: Lessons from the Academy's Review of the National Security Risk Assessment Methodology.

This approach emphasizes evaluating risks based on the potential impact and the current state of preparedness, rather than solely on the likelihood of occurrence. This distinction is crucial, as it shifts the focus toward understanding the consequences of high-impact events and the existing capabilities to manage them, irrespective of their probability.

Workshop two attendees were then presented with findings from workshop one. They engaged in collaborative guided discussions to evaluate LFB's current capabilities—encompassing equipment, training, personnel, and vehicles among other control measures—against these identified risks.

The assessment process specifically utilized a tool from the Building Resilience report to allow participants to indicate their perception of current organisational preparedness against perceived impacts. Each participant worked with a group of 6-9 other participants to position risks on the following matrix taken from the Building Resilience report.



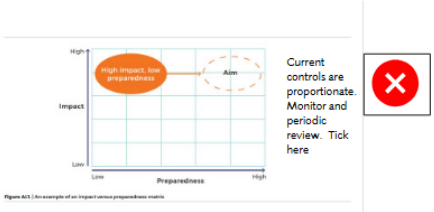
Royal Academy of Engineering: building resilience: lessons from the Academy's review of the National Security Risk Assessment methodology. https://raeng.org.uk/media/g31bttwt/raeng-building-resilience.pdf

Sessions were guided by Strategic Planning, but focussed on scenarios, concerns, and discussion generated by participants. A key aspect of this approach was the emphasis on consensus-building among participants to determine the alignment between the anticipated demands posed by future risks and the LFB's preparedness to manage it. This collaborative process ensured that the assessment was grounded in the views of LFB staff and officers currently working in subject matter areas. For each risk a consensus position was reached and recorded on a recording table, example below.

Risk Theme: Potential casualties' size, shape and weight (body habitus) increasing and potentially exceeding current equipment and training. 4F

Are current controls appropriate and proportionate?

i.e. The impact may be high, but preparedness is also high, so we have proportionate controls



Current controls are proportionate. Monitor and periodic review. Tick here

Is there a potential preparedness gap?

i.e. The impact high, but preparedness is low

There is a mismatch between our level of concern and preparedness meaning there may be a control measure gap. Cross on the chart to indicate perceived level of organisational preparedness and impact or severity of the risk taken from workshop 1.

If gap identified use table to show area for possible new risk controls

Suggested areas for additional control measures	Suggested lead department and/or comments
Policy changes ✓	*OPA lead department*
Training uplift ✓	*Consider training on bariatric lifting and moving*
Equipment ✓	*Consider aids to movement similar to NHS* ~~*Abtech SLIX 1000 Stretcher*~~
Vehicles	
Lobbying (legislation)	
Protection/Enforcement	
Prevention/community work	
NOG implementation	
Additional capacity in an area of work	
Changes to a service strategy	
Enhanced monitoring through data collection and reporting ✓	
Brigade Infrastructure, support services and IT	
Other	