



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Report title

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## Community Safety and Prevention Strategy

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Report to

**London Fire Commissioner**

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Report by

Head of Community Safety

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### Summary

London Fire Brigade have been delivering dedicated community safety activities for nearly 20 years. There is a wide variety of evidence which supports the effectiveness of the fire service in reducing fire and wider community risks through community safety activities, projects, messages and initiatives.

This report presents the London Fire Commissioner with a three-year Community Safety and Prevention Strategy (Appendix 1) and describes the rationale behind the key aims, objectives and priority areas that the strategy focuses on in building safer, healthier communities as part of the Brigade's prevention and protection aims. Over the three-year period actions will be delivered, monitored and evaluated.

### Recommendation

That the London Fire Commissioner approves the draft Community Safety and Prevention Strategy and agrees for it to be implemented, published and communicated.

### Background

1. Community Safety activities have been an important part of our work for many years with the first Community Safety Strategy published in September 2000. This was reinforced with the enactment of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 which placed a statutory duty on fire and rescue services to promote community safety in their areas and put prevention at the heart of what the fire and rescue service does.
2. In 2007, a fundamental review of the effectiveness of community safety initiatives was undertaken by the Brigade. A key recommendation was that an updated community safety strategy should be developed to recognise progress made and to drive a "step change" in the way community safety was planned and delivered within the Brigade. The last Community Safety Strategy was published in 2008 and set out actions and priorities to deliver between 2008–2011.

3. Over the last 30 years there has been a steady decline in the number of people who die in fires. This success, coupled with the services' high standard of operational response, is a significant record of achievement. As the overall number of fire deaths has declined, however, the proportion of vulnerable people dying in their own homes from fire continues to be mostly older and immobile people.
4. We also know fire deaths and injuries have a strong link with social deprivation and lower levels of health and well being.<sup>1</sup> Fire impacts disproportionately on the vulnerable in the community in the most vulnerable areas. The speed of the Brigade's operational response will not always reduce the tragic impact of fire. When fire breaks out, it often spreads so quickly that by the time the fire brigade arrives it can be too late. Along with the very personal suffering when lives are lost and property destroyed, the wider financial and social impact of fire is very significant.
5. In addition to reducing fire risk, the Brigade has increasingly developed its prevention activities around water, road and carbon monoxide poisoning based on the number of operational incidents the Brigade attends. The Brigade also continues to deliver an extension programme of youth engagement and intervention to ensure that fire and wider community safety messages are delivered from an early age.
6. It is against this background that the Brigade's Community Safety and Prevention Strategy has been developed. Community Safety and prevention activities are an opportunity to have a direct impact on the quality of life of Londoners and this strategy contains the specific action points which we believe will make that difference.

## London Safety Plan

7. The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government's expectations for the Service and what is required of Fire and Rescue Authorities to meet those expectations. Fire and Rescue Authorities must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their duties and prepare an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). This is achieved in London through the London Safety Plan. The current London Safety Plan on which this strategy is based was published in March 2017, setting out the strategic direction of the London Fire Brigade. It identifies and classifies our key priorities of which **prevention** and **protection** are key to 'Make London the safest global city'.
8. Commitments in LSP include targeting community safety work, opening up our fire stations, supporting health and wellbeing in the community and producing a new integrated community safety strategy. This Community Safety and Prevention Strategy supports this approach and provides detail about the actions we will take in order to minimise the risks, and social and economic costs, of fire and other hazards.

## Community Safety and Prevention Strategy

9. It is now 10 years since the Brigade last produced a Community Safety Strategy and it is time to deliver a renewed strategy taking account of current risks, opportunities and priorities so that our staff, partners, wider stakeholders and residents in London understand our approach.

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<sup>1</sup> "Hastie, C. and Searle, R. (2016) 'Socio-Economic and Demographic Predictors of Accidental Dwelling Fire Rates'. Fire Safety Journal 84, 50–56"

This strategy not only focuses on community safety but also on wider prevention activities that the Brigade undertakes. The inclusion of prevention also reflects our wider national and pan-London work particularly with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to address comprehensive risks outside of just fire.

10. In addition to LSP and NFCC commitments, London Fire Brigade will also be subject to independent inspection through Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as part of a national inspection programme and community safety will be an integral part of this assessment in 2019. It will be important for the Brigade to be able to demonstrate our strategic approach to delivering community safety and prevention ambitions and activities in a structured and coherent way. This strategy sets out how we will deliver our ambitions.
11. The strategy recognises that London is one of the most diverse cities in the world and the risk from fire varies across each of the 32 London Boroughs and the City. We must therefore target our prevention efforts where they are likely to have the greatest impact in reducing risk. To do this, we will use all sources of information at our disposal both internally and externally through our partners to better inform our community safety work in a targeted way. This will inevitably mean that the profile and level of community safety work undertaken by the Brigade will be different across individual boroughs and wards. It will also mean that our local Borough Commanders will be provided with more direction and data about the risks and target groups in their borough allowing them to tailor specific community safety schemes and initiatives to address them.
12. In line with the corporate aims outlined above, we continue to make community safety and prevention work an integral part of our daily efforts to make London a safer city. We believe that our investment over the years in community safety work has been a major factor in securing a reduction in the number of fires, fire deaths and fire injuries. This strategy signals our determination to improve on that success.

### **Moving our Ambitions Forward**

13. It is the Brigade's ambition to build on its excellent performance in driving down the number of fires to support safer, healthier communities for London's diverse population. Some of the shorter-term ambitions in the Strategy can be realised straight away, some will be delivered as part of the current LSP and some will take a more longer-term approach. Dedicated action plans support all the workstreams within the strategy and progress on actions will be provided as part of corporate reporting processes.

### **Finance comments**

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

### **Workforce comments**

15. The Fire Brigade Union (FBU) commented that under Section 2.0 'Increasing the number of young people we engage with who are successful in applying to work for LFB and other partners. The recruitment process needs to remain scrupulously fair and should not unduly reward those who are involved in LIFE or other schemes. London Fire Brigade will ensure that there will be a transparent process in place for all recruitment. References to Fire Safe and Well Visits need to reflect national discussions within National Joint Council (NJC) work streams before wider implementation in London.

## Legal comments

16. The Commissioner's core functions in relation to fire safety and fire fighting are set out in sections 6 and 7 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA). Section 5A of FRSA gives the Commissioner powers to do anything which it considers incidental to its functional purposes. It also gives a statutory power to do anything which it considers appropriate for purposes indirectly incidental to its functional purposes through any number of removes. The Commissioner therefore has the necessary statutory powers to undertake the activities described in this report. There are a number of other legal issues to be considered as part of the development of the proposals and it is recommended that General Counsel is closely involved.

## Sustainability implications

17. The areas of new activity proposed in the Community Safety and Prevention Strategy, will support improved sustainability within and for the community and be delivered through the expected outcomes of improved quality of life for vulnerable individuals. In addition, there are the sustainability benefits associated with a potential reduction in fires through reduced environmental, economic and social impacts.

## Equalities implications

18. The proposals contained in this report better enables the Brigade to target services at vulnerable people at most risk from fire. This includes, but is not restricted to, people with protected characteristics, particularly older people with health and/or mobility issues.

## List of Appendices to this report

### Appendix A – Community Safety and Prevention Strategy

#### Consultation

Name/role	Method consulted
Operations DMB	15 August 2018
Fire Safety PMB	2 August 2018
Heads of Service, LFC	Draft circulation of strategy for comments on 6 July 2018
Heads of prevention - London Ambulance service and Metropolitan Police	Draft circulation of strategy for comments on 4 July 2018
All Boroughs Commanders, Community Safety Staff, Area Community Safety Staff, DAC Ops, Fire Safety Regulation staff, Communications, Information	Draft circulation of strategy for comments on 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2018
Management, and earlier contributors	Draft circulation of strategy for comments on 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2018
Transport for London	Draft Road Danger Reduction section shared for comments in Dec 2017
Apollo Gerolymbus, David Wyatt and Dan Ingram	Draft circulation of Strategy for comments in December 2017 and January 2018

