

# Appointment to the posts of Deputy Commissioner and Operational Directors for Preparedness and Response, and Prevention and Protection

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Report to:

The London Fire Commissioner

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Report by:

Sally Hopper, Director People Services

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Report classification:

For decision

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For publication

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I agree the recommended decision below.



**Jonathan Smith**  
London Fire Commissioner

Date

**This decision was remotely  
signed on 5 August 2025**

# PART ONE

## Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

### Executive Summary

Following the appointment of Jonathan Smith as the London Fire Commissioner, with effect from 1 July, the Deputy London Fire Commissioner and Operational Director for Preparedness and Response post has been vacant.

Since then, it has been announced that the Deputy London Fire Commissioner and Operational Director for Prevention and Protection role (DC Pugsley) will be leaving the London Fire Brigade on 30 September 2025, creating a second Deputy Commissioner vacancy.

Following an appointment process, it is recommended that the London Fire Commissioner appoints:

- Mathew Walker to the post of Deputy London Fire Commissioner and Operational Director for Preparedness and Response, from 1 October, and:
- Spencer Sutcliff to the post of Deputy London Fire Commissioner and Operational Director for Prevention and Protection from 1 October.

Additionally, it is proposed Spencer Sutcliff temporarily act up as Deputy London Fire Commissioner and Operational Director for Preparedness and Response until 1 October.

### Proposed decision – the London Fire Commissioner

That the London Fire Commissioner appoints:

- Mathew Walker to the post of Deputy London Fire Commissioner and Operational Director for Preparedness and Response, from 1 October 2025, and:
- Spencer Sutcliff to the post of Deputy London Fire Commissioner and Operational Director for Prevention and Protection from 1 October 2025 (following a period of acting up (with immediate effect) as Deputy London Fire Commissioner and Operational Director for Preparedness and Response).

## 1 Introduction and background

- 1.1** The post of Deputy Commissioner and Operational Director for Preparedness and Response has been vacant since 1 July following the appointment of the previous postholder, Jonathan Smith, as London Fire Commissioner.
- 1.2** The Deputy London Fire Commissioner and Operational Director for Prevention and Protection role will also become vacant when DC Pugsley leaves the London Fire Brigade on 30 September 2025.
- 1.3** A selection panel was convened comprised of:

- Jonathan Smith – London Fire Commissioner,
- Sally Hopper - LFC Director of People,
- Marta Phillips -Chair of the LFC Audit Committee,
- Chandru Dissanayeke GLA - Executive Director, Strategy and Communications,
- Peter Lee, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government -Fire Director.

#### 1.4 The final assessment process included:

- A diversity, equity and inclusion assessment, with two case studies followed by a selection panel assessment.
- A verbal presentation and meeting with a panel of internal and external stakeholders.
- A briefing with a Watch at a fire station on the reasons why they should be appointed.
- An interview with the selection panel.

## 2 Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 Following the assessment process outlined in paragraph 1.4 above and taking into account feedback from all elements of the assessment, the panel were of the view that both candidates were suitable to appoint to the role of Deputy Commissioner and recommended their appointment to the London Fire Commissioner.

## 3. Equality comments

3.1 The LFC is 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.

## **Workforce comments**

**4.1** This decision is not suitable for consultation with Representative Bodies.

## **Sustainability comments**

**4.2** None

## **Procurement comments**

**4.3** None

## **Communications comments**

**4.4** Internal communications will be delivered to a range of internal and external stakeholders including an all staff message on the appointment.

## **5. Financial comments**

**5.1** Chief Finance Officer has no comments to make in respect of the proposed decision.

## **6. Legal comments**

**6.1** Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that the London Fire 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. This means the personnel, services and equipment secured by the London Fire Commissioner for the purposes of carrying out the Commissioner's functions.

**6.2** In accordance with Section 5A Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004), the London Fire Commissioner, being a 'relevant authority', may do 'anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying out of any of its functions.' This is a matter coming within that power.

**6.3** The appointment of a person to the role of Deputy Commissioner is considered to be a decision which is 'novel, contentious or repercussive' and as such falls within the Mayoral Direction 2018 which requires the LFC to consult with the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service. Attendance on the Panel by members of the GLA is

accepted as fulfilling this requirement and is applicable to the appointment of both candidates to the permanent Deputy Commissioner posts.

6.4 The Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service has given prior approval (in writing) to the London Fire Commissioner for his proposal to appoint AC Sutcliff as the Deputy Commissioner and Operational Director for Preparedness and Response in a temporary capacity pending the commencement of Mat Walker as the substantive post holder from 1 October 2025.

## List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
	None	

### 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