



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

LFC – 26-016

Hydrant Repairs and Street Work costs

Report to:

Investment & Finance Board
Commissioner's Board
Deputy Mayor's Fire Board
London Fire Commissioner

Date:

28 January 2026
12 February 2026
24 February 2026

Report by:

Claire Sloan - Head of Procurement, Frontline Operations and Professional Services

Authorising Head of Service:

David Rowell - Assistant Director, Procurement and Commercial

Report classification:

For decision

For publication**Values met**

I agree the recommended decision below.

Jonathan Smith
London Fire Commissioner

Date

**This decision was remotely
signed on 20 March 2026**

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

This report seeks approval for a retrospective payment for the period of 2021-2025 for hydrant repairs and street work costs to Thames Water and cost increases being incurred in 2025/26.

Recommended decision:

For the London Fire Commissioner

The London Fire Commissioner authorises the Chief Financial Officer (or his delegee) to commit revenue expenditure of £1,500,000 for retrospective charges incurred between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2025 and up to an estimated £696,000 budget pressure (over the £724,000 already budgeted for) in 2025-26 to Thames Water for hydrant repairs and street works.

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Each year LFB delivers program of around 20,000 hydrant inspections and carries out in-house hydrant repairs where possible. The more complex repairs are commissioned to Thames Water to deliver this service.
- 1.2 LFB is required by Fire and Rescue Act 2004 to ensure there is sufficient water supplies for firefighters and that it can engage with the appropriate water undertakers to achieve this.
- 1.3 The Water Industry Act 1991 lays out the water undertakers responsibly to install and maintain fire hydrants at the LFB's request and the expenses (costs) incurred by a water undertaker in complying with its obligations shall be borne by the LFB. The costs consist of the Water Undertakers menu pricing for hydrant works and Street Works, which are costs charged by the local authority and TfL for lane closure and traffic control during hydrant works.
- 1.4 In 2021, Thames Water advised LFB of their intention to implement significantly higher charges (on average a 63% increase) which led to a protracted 4-year-round of negotiations, this was due to the need for Thames Water to provide a detailed breakdown of the makeup of these charges. Thames Water also signified their intentions to pass on the charges for Street Works which had not previously been the case.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 In January 2026, the negotiations with Thames Water concluded to cover the period between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2025.
- 2.2 The objective of this report is to secure authorisation to pay Thames Water for charges covering this period and also for contingent cost increases now being incurred in FY 2025/26.

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 The Brigade values are:
 - Service: we put the public first
 - Integrity: we act with honesty
- 3.3 The values are supported by the Brigade's commitment to putting the public first by ensuring that fire hydrants across London are properly maintained, repaired and available for operational use and ensuring integrity through the transparent and accountable approach to resolving long-standing financial matters with Thames Water.

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 There are no equality considerations and an EIA has not been completed.

5 Other considerations

Workforce comments

5.1 Not applicable.

Sustainability comments

5.2 The Water Teams diesel vans are due to be replaced in 2026 with electric vehicles as part of the LFB project to electrify the LFB fleet. This will reduce the carbon footprint of the Water Team Hydrant Technicians.

Procurement comments

5.3 The Procurement and Commercial team have supported the commercial negotiations with Thames Water. The charges made by Thames Water are permitted by statute, therefore are not required to be covered under the provisions of the 2023 Procurement Act.

Communications comments

5.4 Please see Part 2.

6. Financial comments

6.1 Please see Part 2.

7 Legal Comments

7.1 Under Section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (the LFC) is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office.

7.2 Section 327D of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, as amended, the Mayor may issue to the LFC specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise

his or her functions.

- 7.3 By direction dated 1 April 2018, the Mayor set out those matters for which the LFC would require the prior approval of either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service (the Deputy Mayor'). In particular, paragraph (b) of Part 2 of the said direction requires the Commissioner to seek the prior approval of the Deputy Mayor before "[a] commitment to expenditure (capital or revenue) of £150,000 or above is identified in accordance with normal accounting practices...". The proposed expenditure exceeds this financial threshold, accordingly, prior approval from the Deputy Mayor will be required.
- 7.4 Thames Water, as a water authority, has a duty under section 57(3) of the Water Industry Act 1991 ("the Act") to keep fire hydrants on its mains in good working order. By section 57(3) of the Act its expenses of doing so are recoverable from the local Fire and Rescue Authority (the LFC in Greater London).
- 7.5 This report confirms for the payment of charges made by Thames Water for the repair and maintenance of hydrants pursuant to section 57 of the Act.

List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
1	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: **YES**