LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

LFC-26-102

Appointment of Independent Members to the LFC Audit Committee

Report to:

Commissioner's Board
London Fire Commissioner

Date:

11 November 2026

Report by:
Andrew Beesley, Head of Governance

Authorising Head of Service:
Kathryn Robinson, General Counsel

Report classification:
For decision

For publication

Values met

Service
Learning

I agree the recommended decision below.

Jonathan Smith
London Fire Commissioner

Date **This decision was remotely signed on 20 November 2026**

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

This report seeks the appointment of two new members to the LFC's Audit Committee, succeeding two outgoing members who will have served their terms of office.

Proposed decision – the London Fire Commissioner

1. That the LFC agrees the following be appointed to the vacant roles for a period of up to 6 years:
a. member 1 – Mr Calum Mercer
b. member 2 – Mr Brian Baverstock

2. That the LFC delegates authority to the Director for Corporate Services to enter into the contracts for services in respect of the persons names in 1 above.

1 Introduction and background

1.1 The Audit Committee, established in November 2020, provides scrutiny and challenge of the Brigade's internal control environment, ensuring it is well managed and able to deliver the LFC's priorities. The committee comprises four independent members, appointed by the Commissioner following a recruitment process, who have demonstrated that they have the necessary skills and expertise from across a number of sectors to fulfill the committee's duties.

1.2 Terms of office for the independent members are for three years with a maximum of two terms. To ensure continuity and retention of experience the turnover of Audit Committee members is staggered. The terms of office for two of the members will expire in November 2026, with the other two members departing in November 2027.

Recruitment

1.3 Recruitment for the planned departures of the two members in November 2026 began earlier in the summer. 141 applications for the roles were received and reviewed and following a shortlisting exercise five candidates were interviewed by a panel which comprised the current Audit Committee Chair, the Deputy Commissioner and Operational Director for Prevention, Protection and Control, and the Director for Corporate Services.

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Recommended Appointments

1.4 The interview panel recommends two candidates for appointment both of whom are considered to have a range of backgrounds and experience which together provide the requisite skills to carry out and develop the Audit Committee functions.

Mr Calum Mercer – recommended appointment as member

Mr Mercer is a Chartered Accountant (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland) and a Fellow of the Association of Corporate Treasurers. Calum's early career was in financial services following which he developed an extensive career in senior executive and non-executive roles across a range of sectors including the public sector, healthcare, housing and higher education with a particular focus on audit, risk and governance. In two recent roles, he held executive accountability for cyber security, IT and information governance, including oversight of a full cyber security overhaul and IT transformation.

Calum is currently the Lay Treasurer and Chair of the Finance & Investment Committee at the University of Bath, and a Non-Executive Director and Senior Fellow at the Housing & Finance Institute. In previous roles:

- Executive Director of Corporate Services at the Royal College of General Practitioners (2025–2026)
- Non-Executive Director & Chair of the Audit Committee for NPA Insurance (2024-2025)
- Group Finance Director at the Institute of Civil Engineers (2023-2025)
- Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee for the Legal Aid Agency (2019–2023)
- Non-Executive Director & Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee for the Solent NHS Trust (2021–2023)
- Non-Executive Director & Chair of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee for Dimensions UK (2013–2021)

Mr Brian Baverstock – recommended appointment as member

Mr Baverstock is a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy with extensive experience in both executive and non-executive leadership roles across a number of sectors. In his early career, Brian held various senior management roles in the Scottish Government before becoming a Deputy Director at the Scottish Funding Council. He is currently a Board Member and Chair of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee and Deputy Chair of the Transformational Change Committee for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and is the Founding Chair of the Audit Committee Chairs Network.

Since 2023, he has also been a Board Member and Chair of the Audit & Risk and Remuneration and Appointments Committees for Scottish Rail Holdings, and the Chair of the Audit & Risk and Remuneration and Appointments Committees for Scotrail and Caledonian Sleeper. In other roles:

- Independent consultant & Associate Director with On Board Training and Consultancy Ltd (2016 to date)
- Board and Audit Committee Member and Chair of the Remuneration and Appointments Committee at the Scottish Legal Aid Board (2018-2026)

- Head of Learning, Governance and Sustainability Group at the Scottish Funding Council (2009-2016)
- Board Vice-Chair and Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee – The Donaldson Trust (2014-2018)
- Board Member and Chair of the Audit & Risk Management Committee at Children's Hearings Scotland (2011-2017)
- Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee at the Scotland Malawi Partnership (2009-2012)

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 The appointment of 2 new Audit Committee members to replace outgoing members will ensure that the committee continues to provide an independent line of assurance to the London Fire Commissioner and to the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service through scrutiny and challenge of the internal control environment.

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: The scrutiny and challenge of the internal control environment by the committee is designed to ensure that the LFC continues to be trusted to serve and protect London.

- Learning: The independent advice and guidance afforded by the committee creates the opportunity to learn from and adopt best practice from other sectors which strengthens the LFC's internal control environment.

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 thePublic 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, andafter 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 havingdue 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 The vacancies were advertised openly on the LFC's website and LinkedIn. Additionally, a recruitment agency issued email notifications of the vacancies to its extensive database of Non-Executive Directors for whom these roles would be suitable. The long-listing and short-listing elements of the recruitment process were undertaken anonymously. Of the 141 candidates who applied the vast majority submitted their diversity data. 67% declared themselves as male and 26% declared themselves as female (7% chose not to disclose). 61% of the candidates stated their ethnic group was white, with 27% of candidates stating to be from an ethnic minority (12% chose not to disclose). 3% of candidates declared that they had a disability. Of the five candidates that progressed to final interview, all were male, no candidates stated that they were from an ethnic minority, nor did any have a declared disability.

4.9 There is no evidence of the process having any adverse impact on those applicants with a protected characteristic.

5 Other considerations

Workforce comments

5.1 There is no direct impact on staff arising from the proposed appointments.

Sustainability comments

5.2 There are no sustainability considerations.

Procurement comments

5.3 There are no procurement considerations.

Communications comments

5.4 This decision will be published externally to the London Fire Brigade's website and key stakeholders will be notified directly of the appointments. The appointments will also be communicated internally to staff.

6 Financial comments

6.1 As previously established, the Audit Committee members (with the exception of the Chair) receive an annual allowance of £13,000 which will continue to be sourced from an established budget.

7 Legal Comments

7.1 Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (the "Commissioner") is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office. Under section 327D of the GLA Act 1999, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the Mayor may issue to the Commissioner specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.

7.2 Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that the Commissioner is the fire and rescue authority for Greater London. The Commissioner is also a 'best value' authority under the Local Government Act 1999 and must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

7.3 The LFC's Scheme of Governance states at paragraph 7, inter alia, that: "The Commissioner has adopted the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government which sets out the core principles on which effective governance should be built. These are:

- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

7.4 The LFC's Scheme of Governance states at paragraph 11, inter alia, that the Commissioner:
- demonstrates best practice in their financial management and procurement through compliance with and regular reviews of their Standing Orders, financial regulations and procurement policies • through the activities of the Section 127 Officer, ensures the financial scrutiny of proposed actions and the management of an annual programme of audits.

7.5 This proposal falls within scope of both the Commissioner's statutory duties and his own governance principles.

7.6 The LFC may agree to the proposed decision to appoint Mr Calum Mercer and Mr Brian Baverstock to the vacant roles and may accordingly delegate authority to the Director of

Corporate service to enter into the contracts for services under Part 4 of the Scheme of Governance.

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: NO