LFC-26-047

LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Service Improvement Framework

Report to:	Date:
Commissioner's Board	10 June 2026
Deputy Mayor's Fire Board	22 July 2026
London Fire Commissioner	

Report by:
Sally Bigland, Head of Strategy and Planning

Authorising Head of Service:
AC Thomas Goodall

Report classification:
For decision

For publication

Values met

Service
Integrity
Teamwork

I agree the recommended decision below.

J. Smith

Jonathan Smith
London Fire Commissioner

Date **This decision was remotely signed on 29 July 2026**

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

This report introduces the new Service Improvement Framework and seeks approval for its continuing implementation and the direction it sets for the Brigade. The framework is a new approach to ensuring the Brigade acknowledges and delivers against all its corporate drivers and objectives in a transparent and measurable way. It is also proposed that a new Service Improvement Board replaces the Portfolio Board.

Recommended decisions

For the London Fire Commissioner

1. That the London Fire Commissioner approves the Service Improvement Framework (attached in Appendix 1).
2. That the London Fire Commissioner approves the replacement of the Portfolio Board with the Service Improvement Board and approves its terms of reference (attached in Appendix 2)

1 Introduction and background

1.1 The Service Improvement Framework (SIF) sets out how London Fire Brigade identifies, prioritises and delivers service improvement. It provides a structured and consistent way of translating our existing strategic intent into actionable and measurable work; clarifying the thread from our vision to be trusted to serve and protect London, from our current Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) through to plans, objectives and deliverables at every level. It is intended to help the Brigade embed improvement activity within an iterative planning cycle.

1.2 The SIF replaces the previous programmatic approach supported by the Transformation directorate. This reflects a natural shift as delivery matures - moving away from a formal programme structure once projects and programmes close and activity can be managed effectively through department-led work and continuous improvement.

1.3 This paper proposes content that will be captured within a more formal Service Improvement policy, to follow once the framework is approved and further embedded.

2 How it works

2.1 Whilst the previous approach focused specifically on transformational change, the SIF encompasses all change, including continuous improvement. In addition, the SIF acknowledges our broader corporate drivers for change, alongside the CRMP.

2.2 The aim of the SIF is to capture and align the change activities generated by these drivers, establish ownership for them, monitor performance and evidence completion – in a sustainable way.

2.3 The SIF will increase transparency on how we can deliver against our CRMP and other commitments as part of our annual planning cycle. It supports Directors and Heads of Service with prioritisation and ownership of delivery.

2.4 It is proposed that responsibility for oversight and scrutiny of the progress against the LFC's strategic priorities and commitments contained within the wider Service Improvement Framework fall to a new 'Service Improvement Board' which will replace the Portfolio Board, the latter of which has a limited focus on scrutiny and delivery of major change projects and programmes within the LFC's portfolio delivery plan.

3 Future planned improvements

3.1 The SIF is in the early stages of implementation and will continue to be refined, with further developments planned including (but not limited to):

- **Strategy** – strategy document for Service Improvement that clarifies the wider picture – starting with our Vision and including the Assessment of Risk, our CRMP and Borough Risk Management Plans. The aim is to provide a clear narrative of how all these (and other) elements join together, underpinned by the SIF.
- **Policy & Guidance** – using this proposal to finalise a formal policy for the SIF and include guidance, based on feedback and the other improvements listed below.
- **Annual Report** – as the Annual Plan is published externally, there is also benefit to publish an accompanying Annual Report, setting out how we have delivered against the Plan, alongside accessible information on our services and how public funds have been spent.
- **Budget Cycle** – there is an intent to more closely align the planning cycle with the budget cycle, as discussed recently at the Service Improvement Board. This alignment will be developed further over the coming months and into next year, with the aim of providing greater clarity on how the two processes work together.
- **Portal Improvements** – the Service Improvement portal that underpins the SIF and captures all the deliverables is designed to be flexible, meeting the needs of both the Brigade and individual users while remaining simple and intuitive. As it embeds, feedback will be used to drive continuous improvement.
- **Clearer processes** – to ensure the portal remains a 'one stop shop' for change, the

process for capturing gaps in service deliverables will need to be embedded and strengthened where possible.

- **Scrutiny** - there is a need to capture more clearly how service deliverables are scrutinized. This will support the closure and assurance process for the framework, highlight more efficiently where there are gaps and ensure it is clear how Directors and Heads of Service are being held to account.
- **Performance** – as the proposed new Service Improvement Board establishes its regular reporting cycle, further changes and refinements are likely. This will include improving consistency in how Heads of Service report progress, for example by being provided with clearer definitions for Red, Amber and Green statuses and by capturing automatically changes in status to those deliverables reported on formally elsewhere.
- **Assurance** – we will continue to work with the Business Assurance Team to strengthen how we assess and validate work reported as complete, and the framework as a whole. The framework will also be incorporated into the Enterprise Assurance Framework, and a MOPAC review will be sought in due course.
- **Outcomes and Benefits** – we recognise a current gap in how outcomes and benefits are captured within the framework. Over time, there is a direction to shift department and directorate deliverables towards a more outcome-based approach. While benefits are currently articulated through the CRMP, we are also exploring the introduction of a more structured benefits management process, similar to that used by the Portfolio Office, for relevant elements of the framework.
- **Risks** – while each organisation takes a different approach to strategic planning, all approaches carry inherent risks and potential weaknesses. We will identify and surface risks associated with this new framework, review them at the Board, and ensure proportionate controls are in place where appropriate.
- **Communication -** there is a clear intention to ensure everyone in the organisation has a broad understanding of how our strategies are developed and translated into plans, as well as their own role in delivering them. A communication plan will be developed and delivered to support this.

3.2 It is anticipated that these improvements will take the remainder of the current financial year and the 2027/28 financial year to deliver and fully embed.

4 Objectives and expected outcomes

4.1 The objectives of the implementation of the framework are as follows:

- **Provide a consistent approach to improvement**
  Establish a structured method for identifying, prioritising and organising improvement activity across the Brigade
- **Translate strategy into delivery**
  Turn strategic intent into actionable, measurable work at every level of the Brigade.
- **Create clear alignment across the organisation**

Link the Brigade's vision through to plans, objectives and deliverables, ensuring a clear line of sight from strategy to delivery.

- **Embed continuous improvement**
  Support an iterative planning cycle that continually defines, reviews and refines our goals.

- **Support leadership understanding and communication**
  Equip senior leaders to understand and explain priorities, change, and progress to their teams.

4.2 The outcomes of the implementation of the framework are as follows:

- **Clear, prioritised plans**
  Improvement needs are translated into agreed organisational priorities and structured delivery plans.

- **Transparency and measurability**
  Corporate drivers and improvement activity are visible, traceable and measurable across the organisation.

- **A clear "golden thread" from vision to delivery**
  Staff at all levels can see how their work contributes to organisational priorities and long-term ambition.

- **Improved organisational coordination**
  A consistent framework aligns departmental, directorate and corporate activity into a single approach to delivery and improvement.

- **Greater adaptability and long-term performance**
  The Brigade is better able to respond to changing circumstances while maintaining focus on its strategic ambition.

5 Values Comments

5.1 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.

5.2 The Brigade values are:

- Service: we put the public first
- Integrity: we act with honesty
- Teamwork: we work together and include everyone
- Equity: we treat everyone fairly according to their needs
- Courage: we step up to the challenge
- Learning: we listen so that we can improve

5.3 The Service Improvement Framework demonstrates the LFB values of service, integrity and teamwork by improving outcomes for Londoners, ensuring transparent and accountable decision-making, and aligning the whole organisation around shared priorities and delivery.

6 Equality Comments

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 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.

6.7 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.

6.8 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required for the Service Improvement Framework, as it does not introduce new policies or changes with direct equality implications. Any activities within the Framework that do require an EIA will have one completed by the responsible lead at the appropriate stage.

7 Other considerations

Workforce comments

None identified.

Sustainability comments

7.1 The LFC Sustainable Development Strategy outlines the advantages of the LFC to be collaborative, working with other organisations to protect London. This report does not introduce any significant sustainability impacts. Where new policies and/or corporate projects arise, they are subject to the Brigade's sustainable development impact assessment process.

Procurement comments

7.2 There are a range of projects, plans, and priorities included in the LFB's Annual Plan for 2026 and the supporting Service Improvement Framework that will require procurement activity in conjunction with relevant directorates and stakeholders to ensure successful delivery. The Procurement and Commercial team will provide an appropriate level of support and engagement at the earliest opportunity to facilitate and deliver any procurement or contractual activity required in accordance with the Brigade's Scheme of Governance (SoG) and the prevailing public sector procurement legislation.

Communications comments

7.3 We will develop and implement a communications plan to engage all relevant stakeholders.

8 Financial comments

8.1 There are currently no direct financial implications arising from the Service Improvement Framework recommendations outlined in this report. Projects, plans, and priorities requiring financial resources in 2026, as part of the LFB Annual Plan, are expected to be funded through the 2026/27 budget allocations. Any longer-term investment requirements will be considered through the budget-setting process for future years.

9 Legal Comments

9.1 The report seeks approval for the Strategic Improvement Framework for publication and agreement to a revised Committee structure with new terms of reference set out in the appendix 2.

9.2 The decision sought in this report is within the Commissioners general statutory powers and internal regulations in the Scheme of Governance.

9.3 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.

9.4 The Strategic Improvement Framework will deliver outcomes set out in the CRMP and wider organisational objectives. A clearly defined framework will ensure the organisation remains both efficient and effective.

List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
1	Service Improvement Framework	Open
2	Service Improvement Board Terms of Reference	Open

Part two confidentiality

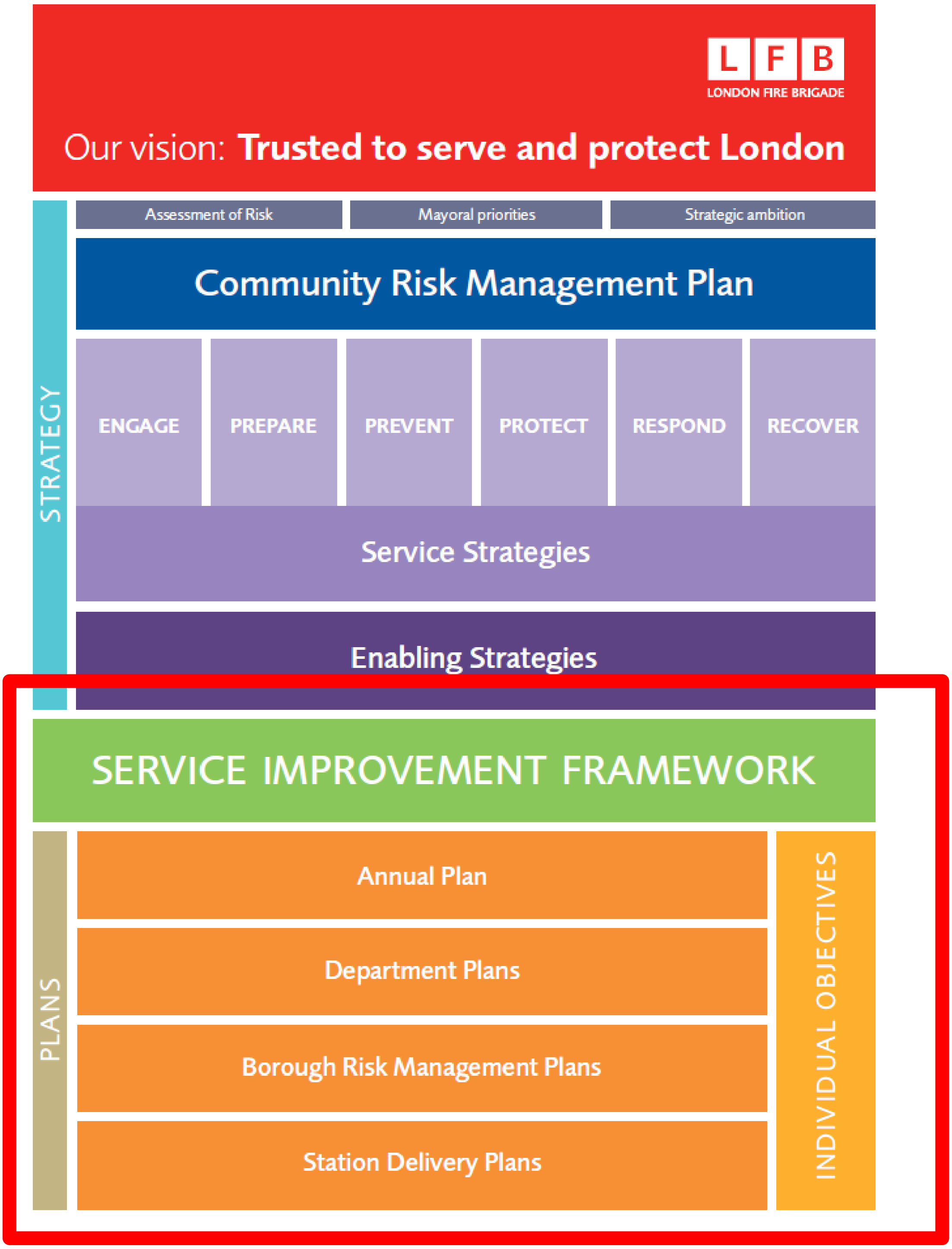
Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part Two form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a Part Two form: NO*

Service Improvement Framework

1 Organisational Context

The Service Improvement Framework sets out how London Fire Brigade identifies, prioritises and delivers service improvement. It provides a structured and consistent way of translating our existing strategic intent into actionable and measurable work; clarifying the thread from our vision to be trusted to serve and protect London, from our current Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) through to plans, objectives and deliverables at every level. It is intended to help the organisation embed improvement activity within an iterative planning cycle.



2 Service Improvement Framework

The Service Improvement Framework provides a consistent approach for identifying and organising improvement needs, turning them into agreed priorities and deliverable plans. It supports decision-making on where effort and resources should be focused, and ensures that strategic commitments are reflected across directorate, department, team and individual objectives.

It brings together the influences, risks and recommendations that shape improvement, supports the prioritisation of deliverables and their translation into plans and objectives. In doing so, it ensures that service improvement is aligned, transparent and connected to both long-term ambition and day-to-day continuous improvement.

An important feature of the framework is that it sits alongside business as usual rather than replacing it.

2.1 Corporate drivers for change

The CRMP is our key driver for change, and alongside it are a range of other internal and external drivers that shape our activities.

2.1.1 Internal

The CRMP commitments have been broken down into more detailed objectives to enable clearer tracking of progress. In addition, the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) sets priorities for the organisation which are detailed within the Annual Plan. The Corporate Risk Register captures our most significant risks, including those identified through the Assessment of Risk. Internal assurance findings, review recommendations and departmental strategies also inform this picture, alongside budget commitments agreed by the senior leadership team.

2.1.2 External

Our external drivers include legislative changes, mayoral priorities, and high-impact, low-frequency events. They are also shaped by our overall budget envelope, as well as recommendations from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), findings from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) (including causes for concern and areas for improvement), national fire standards, and recommendations arising from external inquiries.

Each of these drivers for change is captured and managed differently across departments and functions, reflecting varying remits, timelines and priorities. While no formal hierarchy exists between them, we recognise that some can and do carry greater significance at different points in time. The challenge is to ensure the Brigade delivers against all of them, while maintaining a clear focus on its overall strategic direction as set by the CRMP.

The aim of the Service Improvement Framework is to capture and align the change activities generated by these drivers, establish ownership, monitor performance and evidence completion – in a sustainable way.

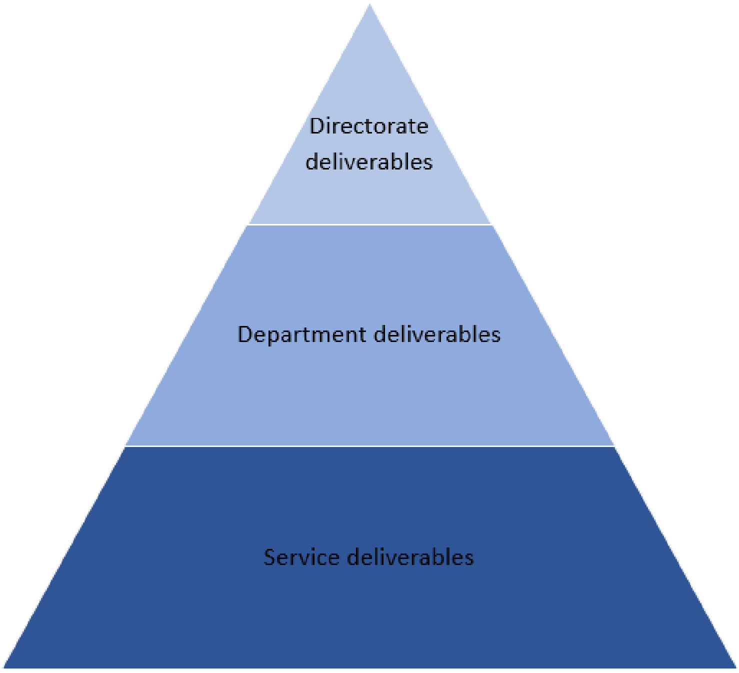
3 Service Improvement Portal

3.1 How it works

The portal brings together all activities linked to these drivers from their multiple sources, including the Corporate Risk Register, the Recommendations Tracker Hub, departmental strategies and the CRMP itself. The process more readily captures formal requirements (for example Fire Committee recommendations) than locally generated departmental activity. These activities are defined as **service deliverables**.

Service deliverables are allocated to departments, where overlaps and/or shared aims enable them to be consolidated into **department deliverables**. These are then further grouped by theme into **directorate deliverables**.

Each Head of Service and Director shapes the wording of their deliverables and takes ownership of them.



There are no fixed rules for how many service deliverables make up a department deliverable - it may be just one if it is sufficiently distinct. A single service deliverable can also contribute to more than one department deliverable. The portal is designed to be flexible, reflecting how work actually happens rather than imposing rigid structures. However service deliverables *must* feed into a department deliverable – there are no ‘orphans’.

Department deliverables are not shared across heads of service; they are framed to reflect the boundaries of each function, ensuring clear ownership. However, most deliverables have complex interdependencies with other departments, whether as enablers, stakeholders or partners. These dependencies are not captured in the portal, which does not replace established ways of working and communication between heads of service.

3.2 Objectives

Department and directorate deliverables support the annual appraisal process by directly linking Head of Service and Director objectives for change to the portal. As Heads of Service objectives then cascade through to individual and team service delivery objectives, this creates a line of sight for individuals through to directors.

3.3 Maintenance

The Strategy & Planning team meets regularly with Heads of Service to identify any new service deliverables. This may include significant planned improvement activity or unplanned events and decisions that have redirected focus and resources away from agreed department plans. New service deliverables from corporate drivers captured formally elsewhere (such as new Red or Amber corporate risks, or new recommendations) are manually added to the portal without requiring input from the Head of Service. If the Head of Service wishes to mark a department deliverable as closed, this will feed into the closure process described below.

3.4 Monitoring and Closure

Discussions around how to monitor and close deliverables are quite recent but broadly the following principles have been agreed:

1. There is no monitoring at service deliverable level – unless it is a CRMP objective.
2. All CRMP objectives, department and directorate deliverables should be monitored and are subject to a form of change control.
3. Evidence is required to support closure – the portal has the capability to store this.
4. From the department deliverables identified for closure, the Strategy & Planning team will select one or two for a ‘deep dive’ by the Service Improvement Board. As many department deliverables are driven by activities already subject to formal reporting and assurance (such as HMICFRS recommendations or corporate projects), the Board’s focus is likely to be on those arising from departmental strategies.
5. All CRMP objectives will require a ‘deep dive’.
6. Further assurance will be provided by ‘dip sampling’ by the Assurance team.
7. Lessons learned from these deep dives should feed into the new Organisational Learning process that will be developed.
8. We are exploring the possibility of identifying and evidencing the benefits of department/directorate deliverables at closure in a more structured way (covered in the Future Plans section below).

4 Annual Planning

Target dates (month and year) are captured for each department deliverable. These deliverables are not limited to the current financial year - some require immediate action, while others span up to five years.

The annual planning cycle begins with directors identifying their top priority directorate deliverables. These then inform and filter the relevant department deliverables. This forms the basis for the Annual Plans and Department Plans, which are communication tools for both staff, the public and other external stakeholders but also play an important role in holding ourselves to account.

4.1 Annual Plan on a Page (POAP)

The Annual POAP is an internally published one-page summary of everything the Brigade plans to deliver during the current financial year. It sets out our key deliverables in an accessible way so staff can quickly see what we are focusing on and why.

4.2 Annual Plan (external)

The Annual Plan is a more detailed version of the Annual POAP, and is published on our external website.

4.3 Department Plans

Each department across the Brigade produces an internally published one page department plan. The plan is based on the priorities set by the relevant Director and Head of Service and articulated in the Service Improvement Portal as department deliverables. This provides clear line of sight to the Annual Plan and helps individual members of staff understand how their team and their daily work is contributing to our strategic direction.

5 Reporting

Progress against department deliverable target dates is tracked as a percentage alongside an overall status assessment, through regular engagement with Heads of Service. This information then automatically rolls up to determine the status and completion of directorate deliverables.

A Power BI dashboard provides Directors and Heads of Service with real-time visibility of progress and will become a standing item at the Service Improvement Board.

As each item in the Annual Plan is tagged within the portal, the dashboard also enables progress against the Plan to be monitored.

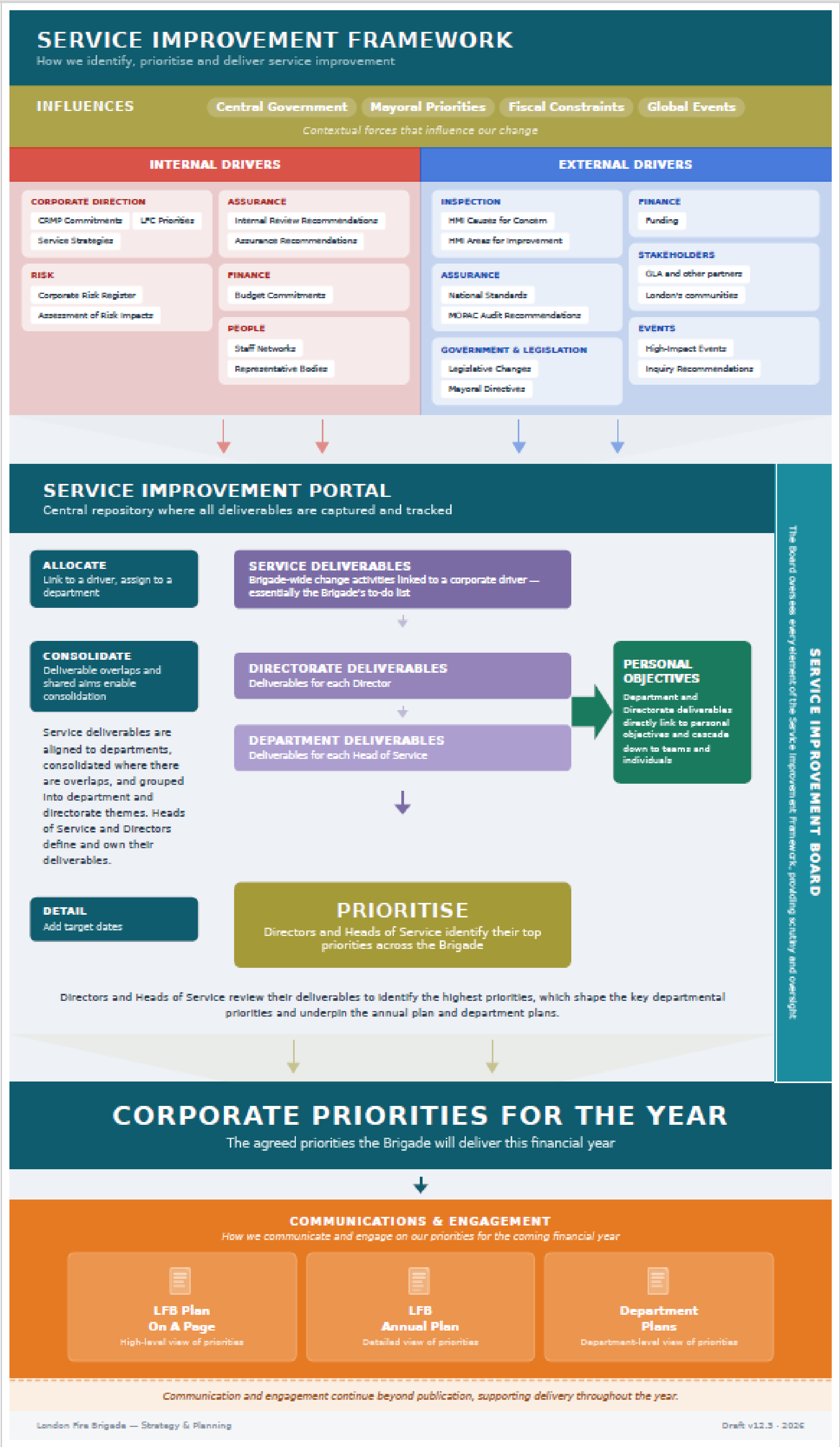
6 Governance and Scrutiny

A new ‘Service Improvement Board’ has been established to provide oversight and scrutiny of the progress against the LFC’s strategic priorities and commitments contained within the CRMP, the Annual Plan and the wider Service Improvement Framework.

The scrutiny provided by the Board is critical. Meeting quarterly and reporting to Commissioner’s Board, it will review progress in delivering our commitments, undertake deep dives where commitments or initiatives are off track or impede delivery, requiring responsible officers to attend board meetings to set out steps and mitigating actions to bring progress back on track. Among other things the Board will also monitor and scrutinise progress of major change projects and programmes included in the LFC’s portfolio delivery plan.

Service Delivery Board is one of a number of mechanisms within a wider governance system for holding ourselves to account. This includes the Service Improvement Portal, the Recommendations Tracker Hub, appraisal conversations, CRMP KPIs, external oversight from MOPAC and HMICFRS, internal assurance, the Corporate Risk Register and regular 1:1s. Together these mechanisms ensure we remain accountable and transparent in how we deliver against all our commitments - not just those set out in the CRMP.

7 Service Improvement Framework schematic



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. PURPOSE

Service Improvement Board provides oversight and scrutiny of the progress against the LFC's strategic priorities and commitments contained within the Community Risk Management Plan, the Annual Plan and the wider Service Improvement Framework. It holds responsibility for resolving issues that impede delivery and benefits realisation.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The membership is comprised of individuals who have the skills, knowledge or interests relating to the board's responsibilities. Board members are expected to:

- Prepare for the meeting by reading the agenda papers
- Arrive on time
- Actively participate in the meeting, providing thoughtful input and challenge to board deliberations

If unavailable, provide apologies to the Governance Manager and arrange for a substitute to attend (at a rank or grade commensurate with the member concerned or a direct reportee with sufficient insight to contribute to board business). It is the board member's responsibility to provide the substitute with the meeting papers and a brief on the business for that meeting.

Board membership is comprised of the following:

AC, Risk, Assurance, Strategy & Portfolio (Chair)
Director for Corporate Services
Director for People Services
Director for Communications & Engagement
Director for Prevention, Protection, Operational Policy & Control
Director Preparedness & Response
Assistant Director, Finance
Chief Digital Data Officer
Head of Strategy & Planning
Strategic Communications Lead
Head of Organisation Development
Portfolio Manager

Other staff will be invited to attend board meetings as appropriate to the agenda, whether as a report presenter, as a subject matter expert or as an observer (the latter being subject to prior agreement with the Chair and notification of the Governance Manager).

3. MEETINGS

Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis. It will be for the Chair to determine requests for additional meetings. In the absence of the Chair the Board will appoint one of its cohort to chair the meeting.

Action lists will be issued no later than 48 hours after the meeting. Draft minutes will be circulated within 5 working days of the meeting.

An electronic agenda will be available to Board members via MS Teams at least 5 clear working days in advance of a meeting.

4. REPORTING LINES

Minutes from meetings of Service Improvement Board will be reported to the next meeting of Commissioner Board.

5. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- To monitor and scrutinise progress of delivery of the commitments in the CRMP and the LFC's Annual Plan through the service improvement framework, recommending corrective action where necessary;
- To undertake deep dives where commitments or initiatives are off track or impede delivery, requiring responsible officers to attend board meetings to set out steps and mitigating actions to bring progress back on track.
- To review draft annual LFC Annual plans in advance of scrutiny at Commissioner's Board
- Monitor and scrutinise progress of major changes projects and programmes included in the portfolio delivery plan, including risks to delivery
- To provide a quarterly overview report to Commissioner's Board

6. OTHER MATTERS

The board shall be supported administratively by a Governance Manager, whose duties in this respect will include:

- Agreement of agenda with the Chair

- Collation and distribution of papers no less than 5 working days in advance of the meeting. Late items can only be added with the prior agreement of the Chair.

- Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for the servicing of the board including producing the minutes of the meeting and taking forward matters arising and issues to be carried forward

- Advising the board on pertinent governance-related issues