

Appointment of the LFC Deputy Commissioner (statutory role)

Report to:

Date:

London Fire Commissioner

Report by: Kathryn Robinson, General Counsel

Authorising Head of Service:

General Counsel

Report classification:

For decision

For publication/Not for publication: For publication

Values met

Service
Teamwork

I agree the recommended decision below.



Jonathan Smith
London Fire Commissioner

Date

**This decision was remotely
signed on 30 September 2025**

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

The role of the statutory Deputy London Fire Commissioner is set out in Schedule 27 A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 and provides that an appointment requires consent of the Mayor of London. The London Fire Commissioner Governance Direction 2018 requires the London Fire Commissioner to obtain prior approval from the Mayor of London and to have undertaken prior consultation with the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service for an appointment.

Further to the above, the London Fire Commissioner may make an appointment to the role of statutory Deputy London Fire Commissioner.

Decision – the London Fire Commissioner

That the London Fire Commission, having consulted with the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service and received prior approval from the Mayor of London, appoints Mat Walker as the Statutory Deputy London Fire Commissioner with effect from 1 October 2025.

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Following the Mayor's appointment of Deputy Commissioner Jonathan Smith ("DC Smith") to the role of London Fire Commissioner, the role of statutory Deputy Commissioner held by him became vacant. Deputy Commissioner Charlie Pugsley ("DC Pugsley") was appointed on an interim basis to the role of statutory Deputy Commissioner.
- 1.2 Following a recruitment process, the London Fire Commissioner appointed Mat Walker ("DC Walker") as the Deputy London Fire Commissioner and Operational Director for Preparedness and Response. The London Fire Commissioner proposes to appoint DC Walker as the statutory Deputy London Fire Commissioner, with effect from 1 October 2025, following the departure from LFB of DC Pugsley.
- 1.3 The appointment of DC Walker as statutory Deputy Commissioner will allow him to exercise all the statutory powers of the LFC in the following circumstances:
 - during any absence, incapacity or suspension from duty of the LFC,
 - during any vacancy in the office of the LFC, or
 - at any other time, with the consent of the LFC.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The LFC is a corporation sole and has responsibility for all the functions of the fire and rescue authority under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and any functions conferred on the LFC by any other enactment.
- 2.2 Appointment of a statutory Deputy London Fire Commissioner will ensure organisational continuity in the event of any of the situations set out in paragraph 1.3 of this report occurring.

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 permanent recruitment process will be run in accordance with LFB guidance and processes.
- 3.3 The appointment of DC Walker ensures that the LFB's organisational resilience is maintained.
- 3.4 The applicable Brigade values are therefore:
 - Service: we put the public first
 - Integrity: we act with honesty
 - Teamwork: we work together and include everyone

4 Equality Comments

- 4.1 The LFC is required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when taking decisions.
- 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 The proposed appointment in this report is on a permanent basis.

5 Other considerations

Workforce comments

5.1 Workforce consultation is not considered necessary and has not been undertaken.

Sustainability comments

5.2 A sustainability assessment is not considered necessary and has not been undertaken.

Procurement comments

5.3 No procurement activity will arise as a consequence of this decision and procurement comments have not therefore been sought.

Communications comments

5.4 Communications comments have not been sought, notwithstanding this it is anticipated that some internal communications may be required to ensure that the decision recommended in this report is communicated to relevant internal stakeholders.

6 Financial comments

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

7 Legal Comments

7.1 Under section 327A Greater London Authority Act 1999 ("1999 Act"), as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner ("LFC") is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office.

7.2 Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that the LFC is the fire and rescue authority for Greater London.

7.3 Schedule 27A of the 1999 Act states at paragraph 3 that:

(1) The London Fire Commissioner may exercise the power in section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 (appointment of staff) to appoint a Deputy London Fire Commissioner.

(2) The Deputy London Fire Commissioner may exercise any or all of the powers and duties of the London Fire Commissioner—

(a) during any absence, incapacity or suspension from duty of the Commissioner,

(b) during any vacancy in the office of Commissioner, or

(c) at any other time, with the consent of the Commissioner.

7.4 Under section 327D of the GLA Act 1999 the Mayor of London ("Mayor") may issue to the LFC specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise their functions.

7.5 By direction dated 1 April 2018 ("Direction"), the Mayor set out those matters for which the LFC would require the approval of the Mayor, specifically the Mayor requires that:

1.1 The prior approval of the Mayor is required before any of the following decisions is taken:

a. The appointment of the Deputy London Fire Commissioner pursuant to Paragraph 3 of Schedule 27A of the GLA Act 1999. Approval will be via a letter from the Mayor.

7.6 Additionally, the Direction requires that:

3.1 The Deputy Mayor for Fire shall be consulted as far as practicable in the circumstances before a decision on any of the following is taken:

a. Anything that requires the consent of the Mayor under Part 1 of this Direction;

Therefore, under the 1999 Act the LFC may appoint a statutory Deputy Commissioner but such appointment may only be made in accordance with the Direction and the legislation.

List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
1	Letter of approval by the Mayor dated 30 September 2025	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

MAYOR OF LONDON

Jonathan Smith

London Fire Commissioner

London Fire Brigade

Jonathan.Smith@london-fire.gov.uk

Date: 30 September 2025

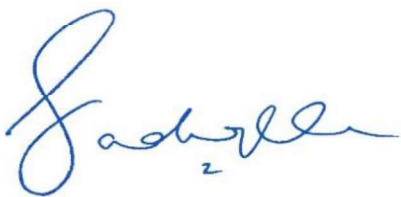
Dear Commissioner,

Thank you for your letter of 11 August about the appointment of a new Statutory Deputy London Fire Commissioner, which requires my approval under the London Fire Commissioner Governance Direction 2018.

I am pleased to give my approval for you to proceed with your appointment of Mat Walker as Statutory Deputy London Fire Commissioner from 1 October 2025.

I note the Greater London Authority's Executive Director of Strategy and Communications, Chandru Dissanayeke, sat on the interview panels for this appointment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sir Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London